# Voice in Composition Theory and Practice: The Epideictic Function of Metaphor in Radical Writing Pedagogies

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Patrick Bruch, Advisor

January 2017

**Acknowledgements**

There are more people than I could ever acknowledge on this page without whom this project could not be. But I'll try.

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Pat Bruch, for never giving up hope that someday this thing would actually be completed, and for waiting patiently as I cried about child-rearing frustrations in his office, always offering useful advice and perspective.

To my committee: Dr. Tom Reynolds, for offering kindness and encouragement and for sharing his thoughtful research and work with students, Dr. Richard Graff for being one of the toughest professors and best readers of my work, and Dr. Donald Ross for his humor and perspective on the bigger picture. Thank you to each of my committee members not only for providing professional feedback and guidance, but also for listening to and sharing stories of parenthood. It was always lovely to be part of a department that valued life outside of academia right alongside the work I was doing on campus.

Thank you to each my colleagues who provided a sounding board, thoughtful discussion, and endless feedback. To Dr. Timothy Oleksiak and Dr. Keith Harms, I don't know how I ever would have gotten through the first semester without your friendship. You will always be the best office mates I could imagine and I'm so lucky to have found you. You have each shaped my work as a scholar and as a teacher more than I could ever express. I don't imagine that this project would be what it is without you.

Dr. Ashley Clayson, thank you for always taking time to read my work, no matter how much of your own writing you had to do. Thank you for your friendship and for being an anchor in the storm for me more times than I can count.

Dr. Jacqueline Schiappa, thank you for watching trashy TV with me when I just couldn't do anything else, and for showing me what it really means to care deeply about your students and your work.

To my writing center family, especially Cheryl Prentice, Debra Hartley, Kirsten Jamsen, and Katie Levin, thank you for modeling an earnest kindness and inclusivity that I strive to bring to all aspects of my own work.

Malcolm and Colette: you made this more difficult that it would have been without you, but you've also made this work mean so many more wonderful things than it ever could have without you. This is for you. You remind me daily that life is beautiful and magical and a constant struggle. Thank you for teaching me to embrace and celebrate dissonance.

Finally, Mark: thank you. For everything.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Malcolm and Colette, and to my husband, Mark.

It is also dedicated to the memory of Beckett, who saw me through more difficult grading sessions and rushed writing deadlines than anyone else, and who always provided a calm and comforting presence.

**Abstract**

In this dissertation, I develop a theoretical framework, based in understandings of epideictic theory, metaphor, and metonymy, to systematically investigate the metaphor of voice across representative expressivist, critical and feminist, and poststructuralist texts. This investigation focuses on the epideictic function that voice plays in such radical writing theory and demonstrates how voice celebrates and strengthens adherence to shared values in order to create communion with a reader and to move that reader toward the action of adopting a novel approach to understanding writing. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I identify the core value of power, which is celebrated across divergent theoretical texts and which is both strengthened and deconstructed through the use of the metaphor of voice. Although power is consistently celebrated, each major conversation conceptualizes power very differently, challenging various notions of individual agency and structural limitations to enacting power through writing. As voice works to celebrate and reconceptualize power across these conversations, it also displaces and introduces various other values, such as nature, authenticity, and multiplicity. At the same time, voice functions metonymically and, thus, various values attached to a written text are also attached to the writer. I argue that viewing voice through the lens of epideictic rhetoric can both shed light on the metaphor's controversy and can provide a material, linguistic focus for a conversation about embedded values that inform theory and practice in the field of composition.

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# Chapter 1
# The Problem with Voice: Epideictic, Metaphor, and Metonymy

If common sense sometimes preserves the social status quo, and that status quo sometimes treats unjust social hierarchies as natural, it makes good sense on such occasions to find ways of challenging common sense. Language that takes up this challenge can help point the way to a more socially just world. The contemporary tradition of critical theory in the academy, derived in part from the Frankfurt School of German anti-fascist philosophers and social critics, has shown how language plays an important role in shaping and altering our common or "natural" understanding of social and political realities.

--Judith Butler, "A 'Bad Writer' Bites Back", 1999

Yet the biggest problem for voice as a critical term may come from its fans. The term has been used in such a loose and celebratory way as to mean almost anything. It's become a kind of warm fuzzy word: people say that writing has voice if they like it or think it is good or has some virtue that is hard to pin down. We're in trouble if we don't know what we mean by the term.

--Peter Elbow, "What Do We Mean When We Talk About Voice in Texts?", 1994b

One of the few universal requirements across higher education is the first-year writing requirement. Despite apparent unanimity regarding the significance of writing as an aspect of students' postsecondary educational development, there is little professional agreement concerning how writing should be understood and what a writing course should entail. Composition, for the most part, has broken with its founding history of gate-keeping (Berlin, 1987; Crowley, 1998; Fox,1999) and embraced the trend toward democratic, student-centered pedagogies. Such student-centered pedagogies dismiss current-traditional rhetoric as the most useful way to engage student writers. However, even among composition theorists and practitioners that describe themselves as "student-centered," there is a profound lack of agreement regarding what goals are *priorities* and even *possible* when it comes to teaching writing in a university.

As composition theory and the emergent field of writing studies has worked to redefine itself apart from a means for university gatekeeping, several divergent theoretical strands emerged within the discipline. For example, various competing views

exist even among "student-centered" composition theories. The expressivist view practices student-centeredness through a focus on personal, individual development of student writerly voice. Elbow's (1973) foundational text *Writing Without Teachers* describes a pedagogy that displaces the importance of the institution and that differentiates *teaching* from *learning.* His pedagogy, and the expressivist model, focus on cultivating and developing individual voice in order to create more powerful texts that engage a reader. Critical and feminist pedagogies have emerged as another, distinct view regarding how university writing should be taught and theorized. Scholars such as Giroux (1997) and Gore (1993) emphasize writing's inherent political and social functions. These student-centered pedagogies position university writing very differently than do expressivist scholars, advocating for a focus on overtly political, material barriers to writing and ways in which writing courses can work with students to dismantle those barriers.

Yet another, more recent development in composition focuses on a poststructuralist understanding of university writing courses. This view draws from poststructuralist theory to create a writing subject whose individual agency is limited and whose identity is inherently fractured. While composition theories and practices that draw from poststructuralist theory are themselves fractured, theorists in this camp consistently celebrate multiplicity and deconstruction, particularly as these things apply to dominant conceptions of identity and power. For example, Worsham (1991) argues that *Écriture Féminine* provides a useful theoretical framework for writing instruction that acknowledges inherent paradoxes in teaching university writing, and Rollins (2006)

advocates drawing from Derrida's notion of deconstruction to contend with logocentric tendencies in a field that comprises itself of inherited, appropriated traditions. Neither scholar advocates extracting a clear, singular pedagogy, but rather they insist that compositionists must contend with these texts as they grapple with notions of writing and identity in the classroom. Scholars such as Lu and Horner (2013) likewise draw from poststructuralist tradition and implicate a notion of identity as multiple into their pedagogies, often focusing on problematic simplifications of culture and appropriation as they relate to writing.

Reviewing such disparate views across composition studies, of which expressivist, critical, and poststructuralist are merely three examples, can give the impression that the field of composition and writing studies is troublingly fractured. Elbow (1973) and Giroux (1997) differ in so many ways that their theories might not appear to be talking to the same audience or even appear as part of the same discipline. While Elbow advocates removing the university completely and focusing on individual growth through freewriting and collaborative writing groups, Giroux strongly insists that writing instruction belongs within the university, as a large part of its work should be to critique and dismantle dominant power structures and institutions from within. Giroux understands the goal of writing as inherently political, and his pedagogy focuses on teachers working to promote student agency through writing. Poststructuralist theory, on the other hand, criticizes the notion of individual writerly agency and focuses instead on the reader's role in meaning-making. Poststructuralist theory goes so far as to suggest that the writing subject is called into being through the act of writing, and pedagogies that

draw from these theories offer much more nuanced and critical understandings of the possibility for individual agency and writing as a political action. While each view wrestles with notions of what writing *can* and what writing *should* accomplish, their distinct understandings of the very nature of writing, identity, and power can seem incompatible at best.

However, despite the vast conceptual distinctions and incompatible elements among such theoretical strands, a common language and a set of core, shared values celebrated implicitly through this language exist as a unifying force in composition. Namely, despite their dissimilarities, expressivist views, critical views, and poststructuralist views in composition deploy the same common, central metaphor of voice in their discussions of text, identity, and power. Each of these views appeals to the central concept of voice, even as voice's referent shifts and changes. Because the metaphor of voice is deployed across such distinct conversations in the field of composition, voice is met with much praise and blame for being on the one hand a unifying and useful metaphor in the discipline and on the other hand appealing to incompatible conceptualizations of identity and writing. Bowden (1999) in particular criticizes the metaphor's lack of a clear referent along with its "baggage" of attaching itself to various incompatible or dissonant notions of identity and of the relationship between an individual and a text. Voice's champions, such as Elbow, argue that the metaphor's usefulness is apparent in its very presence across dissonant conversations about writing and in its function as a term that holds these conversations together.

Despite many scholars, critics and champions alike recognizing the prominence of

voice in composition studies, no one has yet examined the uniquely epideictic role that the metaphor of voice plays across competing theoretical strands. In this dissertation, I examine the various competing, dissonant values attached to the metaphor of voice by framing voice through the lens of epideictic rhetoric. I identify and analyze the core values across expressivist, critical and feminist, and poststructuralist theories, isolating the way in which voice celebrates and strengthens adherence to shared disciplinary values. Across dissonant texts, and despite incompatible conceptualizations of voice and identity, certain key values celebrated through the voice metaphor persist. In addition to celebrating shared values, voice works epideictically to establish communion with an audience, thereby making more unfamiliar or radical values seem welcome as they are attached to the same metaphor. In my analysis of voice's epideictic function, I investigate the way that voice functions simultaneously as a metaphor and as metonymy in order to understand what values are celebrated by and carried with voice and how these values attach themselves both to a written text and to a writing subject.

In the next section, I provide a brief review of the literature surrounding voice in composition studies. In so doing, I highlight both the prevalence of the metaphor of voice and lack of systematic investigation into the voice metaphor focusing on its epideictic function. I suggest that many of the problems or critiques surrounding voice might be understood through a focus on the values attached to and strengthened by this metaphor.

**Voice in Composition Studies: Review of the Literature**

The metaphor of voice has inspired volumes of composition texts and collections

that deal directly with its use in the field and its impact on student writers (eg. Elbow, 1994a; Yancey, 1994), its dangers (eg. Bowden, 1999; Bartholowmae, 1995; Farrin, 2005), and its ability to shape disciplinary concepts (eg. Johnson, 2005; Lanham, 2003). As a metaphor, voice has and continues to have a significant influence over the way in which composition theorists, teachers, and students conceptualize identity, agency, and writing. In this section, I summarize some of the major themes that emerge from the literature surrounding voice in composition theory regarding the metaphor's usefulness and problems in the field. I argue that despite the attention this metaphor has warranted, there has been little discussion of and no systematic investigation into its epideictic function across the competing strands of composition scholarship.

Voice's ubiquity as a metaphor extends well beyond composition studies. President Obama in his State of the Union address on January 12, 2016, talked about the danger of citizens feeling like their "voices don't matter"; What does it mean for one's voice to not matter? Voice, here, stands in for the whole person, for their opinions, their values, their rights, etc. He urged citizens to "speak out" for themselves and for others. Voice, in this address, as it often does, is an example of metonymy in which the voice of the individual stands in for the whole individual. At the same time, voice functions as a metaphor in this address, for the concepts of individual agency, action, and power.

The State of the Union address illustrates how far reaching this metaphor of voice is. Although my dissertation focuses on composition's use of this metaphor, and the specific values that it celebrates within this field, it is significant to note that this metaphor extends beyond disciplinary specific language and into general, everyday use.

One reason that voice has been such a successful metaphor is that it is widely associated with values generally seen as universal: empowerment of individuals and groups of individuals against the dominant structure or institution. Because of this wide association, composition theorists can successfully advocate for helping writers find their voices, safely assuming that their readers *already know* what it means to find one's voice. Writing instructors can generally talk to their students about "letting their own voices come through in their writing" because the voice metaphor is pervasive outside of the University.

**Voice is pervasive and imprecise.** While compositionists in various camps disagree regarding the usefulness and problems with voice, most composition theorists that treat voice directly agree that it is both extremely pervasive in the field and often difficult to "pin down" or define. For some this pervasiveness adds to its appeal, while to others, voice's pervasiveness and its "fuzziness" are reasons to do away with the metaphor in writing theory.

Some compositionists explain voice's pervasiveness by conceptualizing the metaphor, and what the metaphor signals about a text, as natural or unavoidable. For example, Lanham (2007) makes the uncontroversial argument in *Revising Prose* that all texts have a voice, whether or not the writer constructs one intentionally. He goes so far, in his text, to offer examples of how unreadable or "unnatural" a "voiceless" text might sound. Elbow (1973) makes similar claims in *Writing Without Teachers*, arguing not so much that one *should* write with voice or look for voice in a text as much as that one *does instinctively* write with and read for a textual voice. For Lanham and for Elbow, voice is

such a natural, unavoidable part of a text that the metaphor of voice seems likewise unavoidable and, potentially, invisible. Lanham claims that it is natural to connect the text with the human behind that text. According to Lanham, "Voice, then, obviously means personality. It points to one central truth--the inevitable literary ingredient in all prose" (p. 110). He later calls voice "style-plus-behavior" (p. 113). Lanham claims, in other words, that while voice is hard to describe or define in the abstract, we know it when we see it. This notion of "knowing it when we see it" is troubling for Bowden because it naturalizes our ability to recognize voice and presumably our ability to produce voice. Lakoff and Johnson (2003), in *Metaphors We Live By,* articulate this invisibility of central, common metaphors, saying that "it is far more difficult to see that there is anything hidden by the metaphor or even to see that there is a metaphor here at all. This is so much the conventional way of thinking about language that it is sometimes hard to imagine that it might not fit reality" (p. 11). Voice is recognized as such a metaphor, both within and beyond composition studies.

While some theorists attribute voice's pervasiveness to its naturalness, others see its pervasiveness and subsequent "fuzziness" as one of its major drawbacks. In her incisive text *The Mythology of Voice* Bowden (1999) argues that voice is too often used in composition studies despite its historical baggage, such as privileging speech over text and privileging certain genres of writing over others. This pervasiveness and "fuzziness" make voice a particularly damaging metaphor for Bowden, as she argues that compositionists often use it without recognizing the sometimes dissonant referents and values that the metaphor is infused with. She insists that voice is too laden with its

various meanings and cannot be compatible with certain pedagogies, such as those that do not conceptualize identity as coherent or as singular. Pushing against its use in composition theory and practice, Bowden claims that "However it is framed, voice is a pivotal metaphor in composition and rhetoric studies because it focuses attention on authorship, on identity, on narrative, and on power" (viii). Authorship, identity, and power are all important concepts for composition and rhetoric, and Bowden argues that the way the voice metaphor conceptualizes them is often incompatible with contemporary, competing conceptualizations. However, she claims that because voice is so prevalent and so "invisible," incompatibilities can remain unaddressed or glossed over by a familiar metaphor. Rather than seeing this invisibility and pervasiveness as evidence that voice is an inescapable metaphor or concept, Bowden uses it as a primary reason for composition studies to detach itself from an emphasis on voice in both its theory and its practice.

**Voice and speech.** Composition theorists often position voice as natural by aligning this desired quality in a written text as being more closely akin to speech. Lanham (2007) describes a "paper with real ears" written by a student, saying that: "The sentence allows the voice a full tonal range, a chance for pitch to rise and fall, and a chance to build a climax" (p. 38). In his description of a text, Lanham connects the more desirable aspects, the aspects a reader always looks for, with spoken communication. Lanham introduces what he calls *The Official Style*, a kind of writing that he claims has no "voice" and as such is very difficult to read. Along with being inherently more difficult to read, texts that lack voice also lack a human quality. Lanham again uses

spoken language in order to describe what makes a text more desirable: spoken language is more closely tied to an individual human, argues Lanham, and in the same way readers want a text that contains some individual, human qualities that make it seem closer to speech. Lanham, like most composition theorists who describe voice in text, insists that the voice is what allows a reader to connect with a text. Text that more closely resembles speech, for Lanham, serves this social function more easily. The concept of a textual voice ties that social function of a text to a body by associating desired textual voice with "natural" speech.

For both Lanham (2007) and Farrin (2005), voice serves this important social function within a text by allowing a reader to connect with a conversation. Further, both authors insist that readers use textual voice as a way to mark a text as belonging to a specific social group or identity. For Farrin, context is an important indicator regarding which voice will likely connect with a given reader. Farrin again connects textual voice with spoken voice by illustrating his argument about context through various examples of spoken conversations across various distinct social contexts. Lanham focuses on a more universal, natural understanding of voice. For example, Lanham cites a passage from the Department of Environmental Quality and the reply to that citation. Describing the voice of the passage, Lanham asks his readers to "note the voice--the genuine niggling mindlessness of a bureaucrat on autopilot" (p. 40). While this bureaucratic text has a voice, it is decidedly a less pleasing voice or even the wrong voice, regardless of the particular context in which this text was created and functions. Despite ignoring context, Lanham still describes the textual voice in terms of a spoken voice and, as such, connects

the "voice" with the "mindlessness of a bureaucrat" who, presumably, created this text. The bureaucrat, not the text, is mindless; the author is on autopilot. The author's lack of attention to his language is what makes the text unreadable. Again attaching voice to speech and thus to an individual person, Lanham describes a reply to this text as a text that contains "The voice of common sense, but sensible enough to clothe itself in the insane logic of the bureaucracy" (p. 41). Both Lanham and Farrin use the voice metaphor to transport conventions and assumptions regarding spoken communication into their analysis of textual communication.

Bowden (1999) critiques the metaphor of voice in part because it so often conceptualizes written text through spoken language and, she argues, privileges spoken over written communication. According to Bowden, this metaphor continues a cultural distrust of writing that aligns speech with authentic, inner truth and writing with inauthenticity or inhumanness. When Lanham ties textual voice to the ear, text that sounds more like speech becomes more trustworthy, more moral, and text that sounds less like speech (the Official Style) is inhuman, written "on autopilot," and inherently less desirable for a reader (Lanham, 2007). Bowden argues that voice, because it privileges speech over writing, also privileges certain genres over others. Just as Lanham critiques texts that sound too bureaucratic, Bowden insists that pedagogies such as Elbow's end up making certain genres (such as research papers or technical reports, which often sound much more like Lahnam's Official Style) automatically less valued because they conventionally utilize a style that sounds less like spoken communication. Bowden argues that tying voice to speech can lead to difficulties in students' ability to recognize

their "voice" in any genres other than personal reflections or personal essays. Bowden argues that written communication should be valued as something distinct from spoken communication, and thus she advocates abandoning the voice metaphor because it conceptualizes, and values, written texts in terms of spoken language rather than on their own terms, within their various contexts.

**Voice and its paradoxes.** Another aspect of voice's pervasiveness in the discipline of composition and writing studies are certain paradoxes contained within or transported through this metaphor. For example, according to composition scholars such as Lanham (2003, 2007), Bowden (1999), Elbow (1973, 1994b), and Farrin (2005), voice is something that is at once intensely personal (the author's voice) and social (the quality that connects a text with a reader). Voice then seems to be marked through stylistic features that link a text to an author and that connect the text to a particular audience. So, voice is a paradoxical metaphor that refers to something both within and beyond a text that is at once personal and communal. While Bowden argues that such paradoxes embedded within and carried by the deployment of voice render it virtually useless, scholars such as Elbow describe this feature of voice as one of its greatest strengths. Elbow and Lanham both agree that voice plays a key role in a writer's ability to connect with a reader and, thus, to create a powerful text.

In addition to being at once intensely individual and inherently social, Bowden argues that voice is always paradoxical because it is so laden with a history that is no longer compatible with the way that most contemporary writing theorists conceptualize a text. Bowden (1999) articulates this sentiment when she says that:

> Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn in an examination of the confluences of these trends [of the 'voice' metaphor in composition and writing theory] has to do with a kind of conflict of interest: that is, even in the post-oratorical, post-expressionist, postmodern mood that seems to guide much of our thinking today, we are still preoccupied with voice, perpetuating a trend begun in the early days of writing. (p. 60)

According to Bowden, voice connects writing instructors to a past conceptualization of the self that is overly romantic and does not really allow for different, multiple, contemporary understandings of self and identity. In addition to constructing incompatible notions of identity, the metaphor of voice also continues what Bowden describes as a long, historical cultural practice of privileging speech over writing, since it invokes the notion that speech is closer to one's inner truth. As such she argues that the voice metaphor privileges certain genres and in fact works to isolate students further from academic writing. As such, Bowden warns that theories and pedagogies that rely so heavily on the metaphor of voice are actually counterintuitive to students' ability to find their voices in the academy.

While Elbow (1973) uses voice in order to encourage a pedagogy that allows students to see themselves in their texts, Bowden (1999) argues that voice might function in a way that isolates students from academic writing. Also investigating the degree to which students are able to personally connect with various forms of writing, Lenhart et al. (2008) remark that:

> the digital age presents a paradox. Most teenagers spend a considerable amount

> of their life composing texts, but they do not think that a lot of the material they create electronically is real writing. The act of exchanging emails, instant messages, texts, and social network posts is communication that carries the same weight to teens as phone calls and between-class hallway greetings

Bowden argues that if voice celebrates a kind of writing that is authentic, then anything the student feels is inauthentic cannot be celebrated. At the same time, however, Bowden and Farrin (2005) point out that "inauthentic" genres such as research writing are generally more highly valued in academic discourse communities. Royster (1996) and hooks (1989) examine their experiences navigating academic writing culture, discovering that their texts marked by readers as containing more "authentic voice" were at the same time the most stylistically removed from academic discourse. The text valued for containing more voice were at the same time marked as less valued. Bowden argues that voice, with all its disciplinary historical baggage, constructs these types of paradoxes.

Like Bowden (1999), Farrin (2005) also critiques voice for too often relying on an outdated, romantic notion of a stable, unified self. Unlike Bowden, Farrin insists that composition theorists and practitioners can adjust the metaphor of voice in order to encompass different, more nuanced understandings of writerly identity. Farrin insists that if identity is conceptualized differently, the metaphor of voice can likewise shift to match various schools of thought. Farrin describes his pedagogy, which relies on the metaphor of voice but which looks very different from Elbow's expressivist voice pedagogy, saying that students:

> would study someone else, and someone else, until these integrated sources had

> been absorbed and had changed them, making them like no one else, and the prose that came through them, channeled through a complex web of appropriated voices, those anterior sources, would be their own. Having mastered so many dialects, they could play the language in any idiom, improvising as they did so. (p. 149)

Farrin critiques pedagogies that imagine voice as singular and as unchanging, and instead offers a pedagogy that understands voice as something that students can, through imitation and study, change to emulate other, more valued, voices.

**Voice and Individual Value: Literacy as a state of grace**. In addition to creating paradoxes of competing values, and to conceptualizing identity according to these values, voice works to value an individual in specific ways. Composition theorists, particularly those I discuss in this dissertation, often attach voice to individual agency, and voice serves as the metaphor that allows many compositionists and writing instructors to establish and explore the relationship between an individual, the text she creates, and the realization of power. So often, the connection between an individual's agency and the act of writing is so strong that it is difficult to separate writing from the individual person, and to critique a piece of writing carries the potential burden of critiquing the individual and her mental fitness or her worth. This connection between an individual and a text leads to certain conceptualizations of writing teachers' roles and dictates appropriate pedagogy and interactions with students. For example, there is a wealth of scholarship that describes a "grand narrative" of writing centers as safe spaces, for both students and for tutors (e.g., McKinney, 2013; Sloan, 2003). Understanding the writing center as a

safe space was a large part of my own training while working as a writing consultant at not one, but multiple university writing centers that I came to call home over the years. Similarly, critical pedagogues work to make their classrooms student-centered spaces that disassemble traditional hierarchies and power structures associated with writing and texts (Luke & Gore, 1997; Giroux, 1997). Elbow's (1973) *Writing Without Teachers* also works to disconnect writing from the experts of the institution so that those who are too intimidated to write can see themselves as writers.

The associations and values embedded in the metaphor of voice work to attach a text to the person who created that text and work to conceptualize the relationship between an individual, a text, and power. Sylvia Scribner (1984) describes a specific conceptualization of literacy as a "state of grace" in her sociolinguistic text "Literacy in Three Metaphors." The metaphor she identifies as "literacy as state of grace" refers to that idea that being literate is often equated with having moral "goodness" or "worth." She says that there is a "tendency in many societies to endow the literate person with special virtues," saying:

> In the perspective of Western humanism, literateness has come to be synonymous with being 'cultured,' using the term in the old fashioned sense [...] the power and functionality of literacy is not bounded by political or economic parameters but in a sense transcends them; the literate individual's life derives its meaning and significance from intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual participation in the accumulated creations and knowledge of humankind, made available through the written word. (p. 13-14)

Scribner (1984) further explains this typical association of the literate person with a "state of grace" in noting that literacy is often inherently linked to intelligence, saying:

> The self-enhancing aspects of literacy are given a cognitive interpretation. For centuries, and increasingly in this generation, appeals have been made for increased attention to literacy as a way of developing minds. An individual who is illiterate, a UNESCO (1972) publication states, is bound to concrete thinking and cannot learn new material. [...] Literate and nonliterate individuals presumably are not only in different states of grace but in different stages of intellectual development as well. (p. 14)

Similarly, in *Defending Access,* Tom Fox (1999) describes how we (members of the academy and American society at large) generally equate literacy and writing skills with intelligence and with a person's "fitness" to be part of and take part in an institution. He says that, for example, when students at a university are behind their peers in their math skills, the response from the institution and from instructors is generally to figure out a way to get more math support for students. However, when students are "struggling" with writing (or just writing differently), the response is to call them illiterate, which is, he claims, to say that they are *unfit to be here.*

What Scribner (1984) identifies and Fox (1999) critiques is a prevalent way of understanding the relationship between writing and an individual, or between text and composer; Bowden (1999) argues that the voice metaphor plays a significant role in maintaining this understanding of a text as inherently, inescapably linked to an individual, autonomous author. Bowden insists that voice links the text to a composer,

and that the metaphor's prevalence casts this linkage as "natural" or, even worse, as invisible. Bowden claims, and Lakoff and Johnson (2003) make a similar argument, that even when scholars critique problematic notions of authorship or of literacy, it is difficult to break away from the metaphors used to discuss writing that knit the writer's very self to the text she "creates." Voice's work of attaching an individual to a text is often viewed as interpellation; in other words, the metaphor itself constructs a specific type of subjectivity, and reading a text as an extension of an author actively calls that particular authorial identity into being. While they disagree with whether voice is an appropriate, or even avoidable, metaphor for the field, both Bowden and Elbow (1994a, 1994b) discuss the voice metaphor's interpellative power in the field of composition. Bowden criticizes the conflicting notions of identity and subjectivity conceptualized across different usages of the voice metaphor. Because of voice's ability to conceptualize a writer, and because the metaphor often calls a specific writerly identity into being, Bowden argues that dissonant understandings of identity render voice confusing and problematic She describes this problem with voice, saying that "[i]f, for example, one subscribes to a social view of language, especially a Bakhtinian view that maintains that all discourse is inhabited by meaning from other contexts and uses, then the voice metaphor [...] ceases to function effectively" (p. 61).

Elbow (2012), on the other hand, claims that it is possible to separate the idea of "voice" in writing from various notions of writerly identity. Elbow makes this argument partly by claiming that while notions of subjectivity inspire various philosophical debates or conflicts, a desire for "voice" in text is much more basic than any conversation about

the subject. He claims that understanding text via the metaphor of "voice" is natural, and that while voice certainly connects the writer to a text, the metaphor itself is not inconsistent with any one concept of identity.

**Voice and power/resistance.** In her critique of voice-based pedagogies Bowden (1999) recognizes the centrality of power in composition studies, saying that "However it is framed, voice is a pivotal metaphor in composition and rhetoric studies because it focuses attention on authorship, on identity, on narrative, and on power" (viii). While power remains a central, celebrated value across the texts discussed in this dissertation, because different other values are linked to power and to identity, there are often incompatible understandings among these texts of what it means to write as an act of resistance.

Voice can often appear to be mutually exclusive in its conceptualization of power and identity, and composition theorists have argued that a fault of voice is that these competing understandings of identity and the material realities of power cannot coexist (thus the metaphor ceases to be useful). For example, since expressivist use of the voice metaphor constructs a powerful voice, and by extension a powerful identity, as natural and authentic, Elbow's (1973) pedagogy focuses most attention on the work that an individual must do in order to cultivate his own voice. The values celebrated in Elbow's text invokes a valuing of not just the individual subject, but it also places a burden on the individual. Because voice functions this way in Elbow's text, and because of its specifically epideictic function, it can be difficult to then understand the inherent problems regarding how nature and authenticity are themselves conceptualized. Feminist

composition theorists such as Gore (1993) critique this pedagogy for potentially taking what should be a conversation about the need for structural power shifts regarding privilege and instead placing the conversation in the sphere of the individual subject. In so doing, because of this epideictic baggage that connects voice to a certain conceptualization of an individual self, the voice metaphor applied to critical and feminist pedagogies--or, pedagogies that call for a focus on structural change--implicitly invokes values of meritocracy.

Elbow (1973), Farrin (2005), Bowden (1999), Gore (1993), and many other composition scholars focus on voice's attachment to various concepts of individual agency. Elbow and Farrin design pedagogies that, to certain extents, focus on individual agency through very different means of cultivating the student's voice(s). Bowden and Gore are more critical of the kind of agency promised through such pedagogies and interrogate the metaphor's conceptualizations of power as frequently individual and abstract. As a classroom teacher, I have observed the same reluctance to understand written texts, particularly texts that lack "voice" or that seemed most removed from spoken communication, as texts through which students can operationalize any real type of agency through reaching a reader. For example, one of my first-year writing students remarked in a final reflection that "Since this is the first time thinking about writing as communication, I have never really written papers thinking that someone would be reading my paper." Both quotes highlight the social nature of writing and demonstrate that this social aspect is often hidden or missing from our students' understandings of academic writing. More specifically, these quotes demonstrate what I observe as a larger

phenomenon of students not recognizing their own voices as capable of participating in academic writing that is also social. The student who replied that she had not thought about "writing as communication" is using "writing" to refer to the writing she did in my class. She didn't think of her papers as communication, or as being read, even though she knew that they would be read by me. Teaching students to writing papers by focusing on "voice" in a text is one way to get students to think about their papers *as communication* and can be a way to get students to think about how that voice might connect with a reader. The voice metaphor can highlight the social function of reading and writing that can be, as it was for this student, lost in an academic, classroom setting.

Getting a student to conceptualize writing as social, and to see herself as taking part in a social activity, is often connected with the idea of student agency (Luke & Gore, 1992; Elbow, 1973; 1994a). Agency is one major value connected with "voice," which I explore briefly above and explore at length in chapters 2-4 as it has been taken up in connection with different understandings of subjectivity. As in the teacherless classroom that Elbow (1973) describes in *Writing Without Teachers,* individual agency grows/is realized as the voices in a class are democratized. Rather than students only writing for their teacher, students become *writers and readers* communicating to each other.

Bowden troubles this connection between deploying the voice metaphor and valuing or enacting agency, saying:

> The classroom where students all have a right to their voice may not be as democratic or egalitarian or liberating as it is presumed to be. In a classroom filled with voices, literal or figurative, some voices will always be stronger,

> louder, and more powerful than others--especially if the goal is to find and use one's voice in writing. (p. 115)

Regardless of whether "voice' succeeds as a metaphor that empowers students, it does impact how compositionists conceptualize the students' relationship to a text as a reader and a writer, and so it importantly impacts how composition instructors interact with students and student texts.

**A conversation about values.** This brief review of the literature is by no means exhaustive, but rather a very small sampling of the ways that voice has been heralded and critiqued by composition scholars. While many authors have discussed voice in various, useful terms, focusing on the uptake of the metaphor and interactions with students alongside theoretical discussions about identity and power, there has not been a systematic investigation into the epideictic function of voice as both metaphor and metonymy across various strands of composition scholarship. I argue that many of the critiques and affirmations of voice as a prominent metaphor in composition studies are in fact critiques and affirmations of shared values at the heart of composition's operations and the ways in which this metaphor constructs and strengthens allegiance to these shared values. As such, this dissertation focuses on voice's epideictic role, that of quietly celebrating and strengthening adherence to shared values, in writing and composition studies.

In the following sections of this chapter, I explain my method of investigating voice as an epideictic metaphor. I discuss epideictic rhetoric as my theoretical framework, explaining the advantages of focusing on voice's epideictic function across conversations

in composition theory. Namely, I argue that despite voice's apparent fuzziness, it celebrates some consistent values across divergent conversations. Further, the epideictic function of voice allows scholars to present radical arguments through attaching new values and concepts to familiar, celebrated, shared values. As such, voice allows theorists to create communion with their readers. After I discuss the specific lens of epideictic rhetoric applied to the voice metaphor, I discuss the importance of metaphor, particularly pervasive metaphors such as voice, in shaping the discipline's cognitive framework. Voice, as an epideictic metaphor, celebrates shared disciplinary values. Voice, as a metaphor more generally, allows compositionists to conceptualize their work in specific ways. Finally, I discuss voice's dual role of metonymy. Voice is, in composition texts, at once metaphor and metonymy, and while this dual role is useful in conversations about writerly identity and the relationship between an individual and a text, it can also explain some of the criticisms of voice.

I use the three key concepts that I describe in this chapter--voice as epideictic, voice as metaphor, and voice as metonymy--as the theoretical framework for the investigation of the voice metaphor in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. In Chapter 2, I analyze the epideictic role of voice in representative expressivist texts. My analysis demonstrates that for expressivist theorists such as Elbow, voice celebrates the main values of power, nature, and authenticity. I also look at voice's metonymic function in expressivist and other texts and argue that voice, deployed in celebration of power, nature, and authenticity, often leads to essentialized or problematically oversimplified constructions of individual identity. In Chapter 3, I examine how the metaphor of voice is deployed in critical and

feminist texts in a way that continues this celebration of power, but that disassociates nature and authenticity from powerful texts. In the texts explored in this chapter, I argue that voice works to undo a concept of identity that is coherent and autonomous and that voice functions as metonymy not for an individual, but rather for a collective, identity. In Chapter 4, I apply this same analysis of voice's epideictic celebration of shared values to representative poststructuralist texts. In this chapter, I find that while power is still celebrated, the relationship between power and an individual is deeply complicated and that multiplicity is introduced as both a key value and metonymic construct. Finally, in Chapter 5, I examine the implications of analyzing voice through an epideictic lens and broach the possibility for understanding the metaphor as a way to celebrate multiplicity.

**Methods for Analysis**

In the remainder of this introduction, I explain my approach for investigating the role and function of voice in composition studies. First, I explain epideictic rhetoric: what this concept entails, what it does for a discussion of voice, and how I use it in order to understand the scholarly discourse I sample in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Next, I discuss metaphor: I examine what the concept of metaphor entails, I explain how understanding the important role of metaphor does for a discussion of voice, and I articulate how I use the concept of metaphor in my treatment of scholarly discourse. Finally, I describe the concept of metonymy, explaining what it means, what it does for an understanding of voice, and how I use this concept in my approach to the scholarly discourse.

**Epideictic rhetoric.** This dissertation utilizes the framework of epideictic rhetoric to systematically investigate the usage of the voice metaphor across three distinct

conversations within the field of composition. I argue that voice is, primarily, an *epideictic metaphor*. In other words, I focus my investigation on the values that are attached to, celebrated, and strengthened through voice rather than on its various metaphorical referents.

***What epideictic entails.*** Throughout this dissertation, I focus on voice's role across three distinct, radical conversations that deploy voice to conceptualize writing, identity, and power. Specifically, I argue that voice serves a primarily epideictic purpose in these texts. In order to explore how the metaphor is valued and makes connections to other (sometimes conflicting) values, I use Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) understanding of epideictic rhetoric as a theoretical framework and propose that deploying the metaphor of "voice" intensifies adherence to a set of shared values, thus allowing writers to make radical, controversial arguments by stitching them to epideictic concepts. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, the epideictic "has significance and importance for argumentation, because it strengthens the disposition toward action by increasing adherence to the values it lauds" (p. 50). Noteworthy in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's understanding of the epideictic is not only its role in strengthening established values but further in its goal of moving an audience "toward action."

***What the concept of epideictic does for understanding the role of voice.*** Just as the epideictic genre celebrates values to move the audience in some way, voice functions in composition texts as a means to both strengthen adherence to shared values and to move the audience towards some new action. Understanding the voice metaphor across distinct composition conversations provides a way of understanding both how authors

such as Elbow and Giroux establish communion with their readers in order to move these readers towards the action of adopting a radical or novel approach to writing instruction. Further, understanding voice through the lens of epideictic rhetoric shifts the conversation from one that focuses on voice's various referents across divergent views towards one that focuses on persistent, celebrated values that shape the discipline.

Framing a discussion of voice around a discussion of values attached to the metaphor also provides insight into many of the metaphor's criticisms. Articulating the centrality of values in creating a connection with a reader, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) say that:

> The speaker tries to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience, and to this end he uses the whole range of means available to the rhetorician for purposes of amplification and enhancement. (p. 51)

The baggage attached to the voice metaphor that Bowden (1999) describes in my review of the literature above can, I suggest, be understood through the lens of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's understanding of epideictic rhetoric and through the rhetorical concept of establishing communion with an audience. As Bowden suggests, even while the various concepts attached to voice change across conversations, there are certain key concepts, namely authorship, identity, and power, that remain constant and attached to the metaphor of voice. I understand these concepts as *epideictic values,* and this dissertation analyzes how these values are celebrated and conceptualized across theoretical conversations.

Celebrating certain values at the expense of competing values can lead the metaphor of voice to posit values as mutually exclusive, and as such conflicting or dissonant values create unworkable paradoxes. As I mentioned above, in a 2008 PEW study, Lenhart et al. discovered that based on a telephone survey of teenagers, most teens do not consider the kind of writing they do outside of school to be real writing. Schooled writing was real writing, and emailing or texting was something else. When I assigned this article as a reading, my own first-year writing students overwhelmingly agreed that they had never considered the writing they did outside of class as *writing*. Throughout this dissertation, I explore possible reasons for this observed phenomenon related to the values that voice both celebrates and displaces. For example, if voice celebrates a kind of writing that is authentic, then anything the student feels is inauthentic cannot be celebrated. At the same time, however, "inauthentic" genres such as research writing are generally more highly valued in academic discourse communities. Thus, if a student recognizes that her most authentic voice is also a less valued, voice, she must choose between competing values when she writes. I posit that investigating voice through a focus on values provides useful insight into this paradox.

***My use of an epideictic framework.*** Because I focus on voice as an epideictic metaphor, my dissertation focuses on *values* and examines how celebration of these shared values allows authors to introduce new values. These new, controversial values, because they are also attached to the metaphor of voice, become likewise epideictic. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 identify and name the core values that are celebrated as epideictic: the values that, through deployment of the voice metaphor, authors present as "shared,"

"eternal," and "universal" truths. Below, in this section, I articulate why understanding the metaphor of voice in terms of the values it celebrates in composition studies provides a useful way into the conversation about voice.

In the expressivist, critical, and feminist texts I examine closely in Chapters 2 and 3, voice establishes communion by celebrating shared values. Even in the poststructuralist texts I examine in Chapter 4, which work to deconstruct the very notion of universality, voice works as an epideictic metaphor to articulate shared values and call the conceptualization of these values into question. As such, another way to view voice is as the epideictic, communion-in-action that allows authors to present such radically different understandings of identity, power, and writing, while at the same time upholding and strengthening some core, shared values with the reader. I focus on the epideictic function of voice, and particularly in voice's ability to connect the writer to the reader through communion, in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Voice is often considered problematic because of its "fuzziness"; although widely used in conversations about writing, it is not often clear what, specifically, the metaphor of voice refers to or how it is operationalized by readers and writers (Eblow, 2012; Yancey, 1994; Bowden, 1999). In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1997) introduces a concept that is useful to the discussion of voice in composition studies. He says "Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a 'beetle.' No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle" (p. 100). He says that people talk about their beetles and assume that they know what others are describing or even referring to when they use the term "beetle," but

because each individual can only see into their own boxes, they really only understand the other's use of that term in terms of our own experiences. In other words, each individual only understands what the other is describing by looking inward (into his own box). While each person talks about his beetle without any need to explain what he means, no one can ever really be sure that he knows what a beetle is for anyone other than himself. Across conversations in composition, voice works as a "beetle in a box" for each author, and while the term seems to work as a metaphor, its *referent* is often unclear. My use of epideictic rhetoric as a theoretical framework allows a way to talk about composition's "beetle in a box" without needing to discuss what the beetle *looks like* by instead focusing on the values it celebrates and the epideictic *work* it does for each author. Further, I argue that voice is especially able to perform this epideictic function because it is such a pervasive and fuzzy metaphor: most composition theorists that use the metaphor carry around his own private concept of voice and when another theorist deploys this metaphor, he looks into his own box. In other words, the metaphor itself is epideictic, celebrating something shared and valued across composition theory.

**Voice as metaphor.** In addition to understanding its epideictic function across composition texts, my investigation appreciates voice as an epideictic *metaphor.* As such, I identify in this section what an investigation of metaphorical language, particularly a pervasive and foundational metaphor such as voice, entails.

***What metaphor entails.*** According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003) in *Metaphors We Live By,* "the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (p. 3). Lakoff and Johnson illustrate metaphor's essential role in

making sense of the world, even to the extent that metaphors shape entire conceptual systems. They point out that metaphors are "pervasive in everyday life" and that metaphors make up the conceptual systems which "govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details" (p.3). And further, according to Lakoff and Johnson, "our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities" (p. 3). In addition to allowing individuals to converse about novel or unfamiliar ideas by relating them to familiar concepts, Lakoff and Johnson stress the importance of metaphors in shaping how each new concept is perceived and their importance in everyday, material interactions with the world. In composition and writing studies, the metaphor of voice often structures "what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people" (p.3). Voice is central "in defining our everyday realities" regarding how writers and readers interact with text and, more specifically, what is understood to be the relationship between writing, identity, and power.

***What the concept of metaphor does for understanding the role of voice.*** My examination of the voice metaphor works to uncover the specific way that voice conceptualizes the values attached to writing and to writers. As Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue, such central metaphors impact each interaction with and perception of the world, as they "govern our everyday functioning," whether or not individuals who deploy these metaphors realize their impact (p. 3). In fact, the way in which metaphor shapes conceptualizations, and I argue values, is often hidden by a metaphor's pervasiveness. For compositionists, the metaphor of voice plays a larger role in the conceptualization of writing than merely signaling or referring to a desired style of prose. Voice shapes the

very way in which writing *is conceptualized* and, as such, allows compositionists to make certain claims about pedagogical practices and the possibilities of making meaning through text. Although the metaphor of voice serves such an integral role in shaping the values and boundaries of composition theory and practice, "our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of" (Lakoff & Johnson, p. 3). Lakoff and Johnson examine conventional methods of argument to illustrate both the pervasiveness and invisibility of metaphor, saying that "our conventional ways of talking about arguments presuppose a metaphor we are hardly ever conscious of" (p. 5). Voice has long been one of the key metaphors structuring the conceptual system that governs how composition theorists and practitioners "get around in the world" and largely impacts how they relate to texts and to their students. Further, "voice" is one of these pervasive metaphors that has become almost invisible; although writing theorists talk about voice often, the "everyday realities" constructed through this metaphor are so much a part of how texts are conceptualized that they have become second nature (Elbow, 1973; Bowden, 1999; Yancey, 1994).

Again illustrating the deep importance of metaphor in the ability to interact with and make sense of the world, noted cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter (2001) claims that all thinking is metaphorical; like Lakoff and Johnson (2003), who note that metaphor and metonymy produce our conceptual framework, Hofstadter argues that we can only think in terms of analogy, or by relating one concept to another. He makes the, as he calls it, controversial claim in his field that "every concept we have is essentially nothing but a tightly packaged bundle of analogies" and "that all we do when we think is to move

fluidly from concept to concept — in other words, to leap from one analogy-bundle to another — and [...] such concept-to-concept leaps are themselves made via analogical connection, to boot" (p. 1). For Hofstadter, individuals cannot compartmentalize the cognitive act of analogy making, since all thinking and conceptual organizing needed to make sense of the world happens through analogy. In other words, he argues that people understand new concepts only by relating them to familiar concepts, and they instinctively group "like" concepts together. According to this way of thinking, then, the use of "voice" as a metaphor is not disconnected from non-metaphorical use of language. In other words, voice is not immediately understood as metaphorical, and it is not bracketed off from more "literal" conversations about text.

***My use of metaphor in understanding the scholarly discourse.*** Voice is, I argue, in addition to working as a metaphor that structures our discipline's conceptual framework, composition's "beetle in a box." It serves an important role as a concept without each person perhaps *needing* to know exactly what the next person's beetle looks like. Wittgenstein (1997) uses the concept, and word, "pain" as an example. We only really know pain based on our own experience, but we know what our neighbor is talking about when he says that he's experiencing pain. At the same time, we can't know that "pain" is experienced in the same way for both of us. Derrida (1988) argues that all language functions in this way, but that we are still able to communicate. Indeed, even if we can only ever know what we mean ourselves when we talk about "voice," the very number of conversations about "voice" indicate that the term is still *useful.*

**Metonymy.** In addition to functioning as a metaphor for some desired, powerful

quality in a text, voice often functions as metonymy when deployed across composition theory. As Barthes (1967) describes in his famous essay "Death of the Author," there often exists the belief that the text can replace or stand in for the human individual that created it. *Voice* often functions in discussions about writing as the specific metonymic tool that conceptualizes the text as standing in for the writer. While voice's function as epideictic metaphor and its function as metonymy are related and often conflated in texts that rely on the metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) state that:

> Metaphor and metonymy are different *kinds* of processes. Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to *stand for* another. [...] It also serves the function of providing understanding" (p. 36).

While both voice's metaphoric function and metonymic function "provid[e] understanding" about how a reader and writer interact with a text, voice's metonymic function conceptualizes the text as essentially connected to the writer. Voice, when deployed as metonymy, stands in for the whole writer, making the writer's identity part of the discussion about writing and teaching. In composition theory that relies on *voice*, in other words, a conversation about a text (and what is desired or valued in a text) becomes a conversation about the writer (and what is desired or valued in a writer).

***What metonymy entails.*** Understanding voice as metonymy draws specific attention to the ways in which voice substitutes a part of the individual for the whole individual. Voice as metonymy and voice as metaphor are very closely related;

explaining the subtle distinctions, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) further say that "metonymy serves some of the same purposes that metaphor does, and in somewhat the same way, but it allows us to focus more specifically on certain aspects of what is being referred to" (p. 37). They use the culturally specific example of substituting the face for the whole person. Similarly, the voice metaphor not only links something about an individual to a text, but, through metonymy, stands in for the whole person, or what is most essential, unique, or identifiable about a person. As I mentioned about, voice's metaphorical prevalence extends well beyond composition studies, and its metonymic function does as well. For example, President Obama in his State of the Union address on January 12, 2016, talked about the danger of citizens feeling like their "voices don't matter;" What does it mean for one's voice to not matter? Voice, here, stands in for the whole person, for their opinions, their values, their rights, etc. He urged citizens to "speak out" for themselves and for others. Voice, in this address, as it often does, is an example of metonymy in which the voice of the individual stands in for the whole individual. At the same time, voice functions as a metaphor in this address, for the concepts of individual agency, action, and power.

***What the concept of metonymy does in understanding the role of voice.***

Emphasizing the degree to which metonymy impacts day-to-day actions and decision-making, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) say that pervasive metonymic concepts, of which I argue "voice" is a good example, are what we use to "organize our thoughts and actions." Further explaining how metonymic concepts serve this role, they argue that these concepts:

> Allow us to conceptualize one thing by means of its relation to something else. When we think of a *Picasso,* we are not just thinking of a work of art alone, in and of itself. We think of it in terms of its relation to the artist, that is, his conception of art, his technique, his role in art history, etc." (p. 39).

Even in this particular choice of example, Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate how frequently a work of art is conceptualized as inherently, intimately related to its author. Similarly, when "voice" enters into the conversation about writing, I argue that compositionists are doing more than trying to describe something in the text like style, ethos, etc. They are, rather, describing the author *in* the text. Further, each time the metaphor is deployed, the relationship between text and author is reinscribed into the discipline's conceptualization of how this relationship functions.

Just as Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Lanham (2003), and Hofstadter (2001) claim, metaphors such as voice allow for making sense of the world and shape individual and cultural conceptual frameworks which, in turn, impact how everything is perceived and understood. Because voice functions both as a metaphor and as metonymy, which I argued above, voice both creates a conceptual framework for understanding a text and, at the same time, conceptualizes the identity of individuals who create and are attached to a text. So, using "voice" to describe a text at once constructs the text as a human being and the human "voice" as the most essential part of the human being. Another way to consider what "voice" does, as a metaphor, is to think of it as always linking identity with writing. Thus, to look for a writer's voice is to look for the writer's identity, regardless of how identity is conceptualized. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I articulate how expressivist,

critical and feminist, and poststructuralist conversations construct identity through the voice metaphor. In this section I argue that part of voice's metaphorical and metonymic function works to construct writerly identity by imagining various conceptual, abstract identities. Further, constructing writerly identity can impede instructor's interactions with students and stifle students' abilities to really see themselves in a text. Since writerly identity is already conceptualized, a writer might feel pressure to conform to preexisting, valued identities, which distances her sense of individual self from the self she sees as valued in a text.

***My use of metonymy in my investigation of the scholarly discourse.*** I use the concept of metonymy in my analysis to understand how voice not only celebrates shared values but also works to attach these values to an individual writer (whether that individual is conceptualized as autonomous or collective, as natural or as constructed).

One phenomenon I have often observed as a writing instructor, and one which I explore in each body chapter through analysis of student quotes, is a tendency for students to distance themselves from their scholarly texts. I argue that the way "voice" is understood in such fundamental texts as Elbow's (1973) *Writing Without Teachers* and Bowden's (1999) *The Mythology of Voice* is related to students' tendency to distance themselves from academic writing and develop a fractured understanding of voice that at once values academic writing over other forms of writing and "authentic" writerly identities over other more "objective," traditionally valued academic ethos. As I mentioned above, Lenhart et al. (2008) made a similar discovery when they found that "Teens write a lot, but they do not think of their emails, instant and text messages as

writing. But teens also believe good writing is essential." Teens recognize the value of writing and, at the same time, distance themselves from writing by not recognizing their personal communications as similarly valuable. At the Conference for Computers and Writing in May 2012 in Raleigh, North Carolina, I presented research taken from my own experience teaching a hybrid--half online, half face-to-face--section of University Writing. I discussed, in my presentation, how I used technology paired with readings and assignments centered around the question "what is writing?" and "what does writing have to do with identity?" Based on student responses to readings and open-ended discussion prompts, I summarized my findings as follows:

- Students tend to divorce writing from notions of identity.
- Students tend to resist seeing what they are already doing, outside the classroom, as writing, and resist seeing themselves as writers.
- This resistance seems linked to a valuation of writing that explicitly or purposefully divorces itself from the author's "identity" by distancing itself from "biases," "opinions," and "emotions."
- Students tend to completely bracket off and value objectivity and factual writing; they see this type of writing as divorced from the author's "identity."

The way that voice conceptualizes, values, and constructs identity is one possible reason for the phenomenon observed by Lenhart et al. (2008) and by myself in my own teaching. Voice, as both a metaphor and as metonymy in composition theory and practice, functions as interpellation. According to Berlin (1987), "interpellation is especially implicated in power relationships in a group or society, in deciding who has power and in determining what power can be expected to achieve" and, further, "ideology provides the language to define the subject (the self), other subjects, the material world, and the relation of all these to each other. Ideology is thus inscribed in language practices, entering all features of our experience." As I have argued here and as

I specifically demonstrate in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, the voice metaphor shapes composition's ideologies as they are related to power and identity. These ideologies also shape how teachers conceptualize their students and how students are or are not able to see "themselves" in academic texts. In Chapter 2 specifically, I argue that because voice works as an epideictic metaphor to value nature and authenticity, and because voice simultaneously functions as metonymy in expressivist texts such as Elbow's (1973) *Writing Without Teachers*, voice calls certain writerly identities into being as natural, authentic, and inherently powerful and more valued (in Chapter 2 I describe J. J. Royster's experience with this phenomenon and offer voice's interpellative role as one possible lens).

**Conclusion**

Looking at voice through the lenses of epideictic metaphor and metonymy provides a way to understand the role that this metaphor plays in allowing for competing, radical pedagogies to coexist. Further, investigating voice's epideictic function opens up a conversation of disciplinary values, which are the foundation of various competing concepts and pedagogies. In this dissertation, I argue that a systematic investigation of voice's epideictic, rather than its referent, metaphorical function across divergent views in composition theory uncovers the shared values that underlie writing theory and instruction. With this in mind, I investigate the values celebrated across expressivist, feminist and critical, and poststructuralist theories in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, and I work to understand how these values provide a foundation for conceptualizing power and identity. Identifying and understanding the values shared across seemingly dissonant

conversations about writing, and the way that voice both celebrates and strengthens adherences to these shared values, also opens up the possibility for explicitly interrogating these values that are epideictic: these values are so commonplace so as to appear universal and eternal, but it is important that they not be taken for granted or overlooked.

In addition to identifying specific, shared values and understanding how these values shape theory and practice, analyzing voice through the lens of epideictic also provides a rationale for how voice is able to serve an import role despite its incongruities. Even when the specific referent is unclear or dissonant, voice often celebrates the same fundamental value, and as such it allows authors to draw from a shared disciplinary foundation when constructing divergent, novel pedagogies. In addition to understanding its pervasive usefulness in establishing disciplinarity in composition studies, focusing on voice's epideictic function clarifies some of the problematic uptakes of the voice metaphor that are rooted not in conflicting referents but in conflicting, or seemingly mutually exclusive, values. Finally, engaging voice as epideictic explains how the metaphor's "epideictic baggage" at once serves a useful role in establishing communion but can also present values *as* mutually exclusive. This particular epideictic baggage--understanding values through an either/or framework--can get in the way of our ability, as writing theorists and teachers, to really materialize and practice the apparent value of multiplicity.

## Chapter 2
## The Individual Voice: Power, Nature, and Authenticity

*"I think that I was intimidated by the authority of my sources, and I was not able to give my own input on the topic."*

*"Reading Turkle and the forum discussions, however, made me strive to be genuine and to be as true to myself as possible in writing, even when writing a research paper."*

--First Year Writing student final reflections on the course

This chapter examines the epideictic role of the voice metaphor in expressivist texts, a major theoretical strand in the field of composition and one particularly relevant to a discussion of "voice." In order to explore voice's epideictic function in expressivist theory, this chapter focuses on Elbow's (1973) foundational expressivist text *Writing Without Teachers.* By strengthening adherence to shared values, the voice metaphor allows Elbow to establish communion with his readers and attach radical pedagogy to already accepted disciplinary values. As such, the metaphor allows Elbow to break from current-traditional pedagogical models while still celebrating shared values with his audience. Specifically, this chapter categorizes these values as related to the conceptualization of power, of nature, and of authenticity. In expressivist texts, power functions as the fundamental, epideictic value, and Elbow's text particularly capitalizes on a celebration of power to, using the voice metaphor, also celebrate the more controversial, novel values of nature and authenticity. Elbow uses the epideictic metaphor of voice to celebrate and strengthen adherence to the value of power and to conceptualize power in terms of nature and authenticity; in this chapter I examine the relationship between these three values and the way that voice has been used to celebrate and conceptualize each in order to develop expressivist pedagogy that focuses on

development of a writer's natural, authentic, and thus powerful, voice.

In addition to celebrating the values of power, nature, and authenticity, Elbow's (1973) use of the voice metaphor serves the metonymic function of constructing a written text as an extension of or as inherently connected to an individual writer. At the same time that it serves as an epideictic metaphor to describe and celebrate powerful writing, Elbow's text uses voice in order to conceptualize a writing subject as a coherent, autonomous individual. *Writing Without Teachers* uses voice to celebrate the values of nature and authenticity, and a text that is authentic or natural is a more highly valued, and more inherently powerful, text. In addition to celebrating these general categories of values and to arguing that these values must be present in order for a text to be powerful, because voice also functions as metonymy for the *writer,* voice celebrates an *individual* who is viewed as natural and authentic. A conversation about a text, as powerful, natural, and authentic, thus becomes a conversation about a *writer*, who is also understood as powerful, natural, and authentic. In this chapter I work to both disentangle these three distinct but heavily dependent values of power, nature, and authenticity while also demonstrating their relationship to and impact upon a specific concept of identity that is attached to expressivist use of the metaphor of voice.

Elbow's (1973) text is often widely and contentiously debated because of the way that it relies on and conceptualizes voice and the values of power, nature, and authenticity it celebrates through voice. The epideictic role that voice plays in *Writing Without Teachers* accounts for much of this contention. In this chapter, by looking at Elbow's text and at different responses to the expressivist use of voice, I examine both its

rhetorical usefulness and its conceptual problems. After examining Elbow's text I examine Bartholomae's (1995) specific response to Elbow's pedagogical focus on voice. Finally, I analyze other composition texts that explore the limitations of expressivist voice and possible problematic conflations of the values this metaphor celebrates and its metonymic function. These texts describe voice's tendency to essentialize identity when the metaphor conceptualizes a writer as a coherent, authentic, natural individual.

**Voice as an Epideictic Metaphor**

In the following discussion, I explore how the metaphor of voice allows Elbow to advocate a radical approach to teaching writing: getting rid of teachers and instead emphasizing a collaborative development of a natural, authentic, and thus powerful, voice. Elbow's (1973) expressivist text *Writing Without Teachers* presents a drastic break from current-traditional pedagogical practices of its time, and in order to do this work, it relies on voice as an epideictic metaphor. By attaching itself to the already accepted, shared value of power, voice allows Elbow "to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience" so that he can move that audience toward action (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 51). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define the epideictic genre as speech that "strengthens the disposition toward action by increasing adherence to the values it lauds" (p. 50) and that "the argumentation in epideictic discourse sets out to increase the intensity of adherence to certain values, which might not be contested when considered on their own but may nevertheless not prevail against other values that might come into conflict with them" (p. 51). In addition to isolating and naming the values that I see as most prominently

celebrated in Elbow's text, I also pay special attention to the ways in which these values "may nevertheless not prevail against other values that might come into conflict with them." In other words, even the values presented by Elbow as eternal and universal engage the reader in an *argument*; these seemingly unquestionable truths are often in conflict with either contemporary composition pedagogical practices or are in direct conflict with competing values that are also celebrated in the field.

My treatment of expressivist texts in this chapter focuses on voice's celebration of the values of power, nature, and authenticity. Additionally, I examine how voice, in expressivist pedagogy such as Elbow's, signals the belief in a coherent, autonomous individual behind a text. As I mentioned above, in order to perform an in-depth rather than a survey style analysis of expressivist pedagogy, I spend the bulk of this chapter examining Elbow's (1973) *Writing Without Teachers.* In this text, I identify the main values of power, nature, and authenticity, each of which are celebrated through and stitched to the metaphor of voice. Of these values, power is most clearly depicted as "appeal[ing] to a universal order, to a nature, or a god that would vouch for the unquestioned, and supposedly unquestionable, values" (p. 51). In order to examine the extent to which these values are considered universal beyond Elbow's text, I examine critics of his pedagogy in order to show that, across even dissenting conversations about the use of the metaphor, voice still signals a belief in a coherent, autonomous individual and still serves this same epideictic function.

**Metonymy and Epideictic**

At the same time that voice serves this crucial, epideictic function in Elbow's

(1973) text, voice also functions as metonymy for a coherent, autonomous individual behind a text. In this chapter I argue that understanding the metaphor as both epideictic and metonymic provides an important lens for analyzing common criticisms and problems with expressivist notions of "voice." After examining the ways that voice allows authors to celebrate shared values and establish communion with an audience, I work to untangle the ways in which voice also functions as metonymy for a whole individual and transposes this individual *into* the text she creates. Because the various functions of voice happen simultaneously and perhaps automatically, voice as epideictic and voice as metonymy can become quickly conflated, and the values that voice attaches to a text are also attached *to the writer behind the text.*

In this chapter, alongside my exploration of the values celebrated through the metaphor of voice across dissonant conversations, I work to understand and articulate the relationship between the epideictic function and the metonymic function of voice in expressivist pedagogy. I see this work as again providing a lens through which to view both the controversy surrounding this metaphor's use in composition studies and its usefulness and popularity in discussing writing. Particularly as the metaphor of voice celebrates the epideictic value of power, the way in which the subject--the writer--is constructed through the metaphor of voice affects and limits how that power might be operationalized. As the values of nature and authenticity are stitched to and celebrated alongside the value of power in Elbow's (1973) text, these values are often used to critique and essentialize *the writer's identity.* The student quotes (which appear at the start of this chapter and which I return to in my discussion of metonymy) illustrate what I

understand to be a common concern with writers and something that might be explained through a conversation about the epideictic and metonymic function of the expressivist use of voice to signal something that is at once powerful, authentic, and natural and that is completely dependent on the writer's authentic, natural identity.

**Voice and Power**

Among the core values of power, nature, and authenticity that I identify in Elbow's (1973) text, power is the most "universal" and "eternal." While the values of nature and authenticity waver among texts that deploy the metaphor of voice across divergent theoretical conversations and divergent conceptions of self, power is a constant and consistently shared value. In fact, even critics of the metaphor itself still recognize and celebrate the value of power; critiques are often rooted in differences regarding how power can or should be achieved through writing. The way that power is conceptualized, how it is enacted, and its material limitations change from one text to another. However, that power is a goal of writing, and that it is valued in teaching writing, is fundamentally attached to the epideictic metaphor of voice across distinct conversations. As such a foundational value, power plays an important role in expressivist pedagogy as it presents a sharp break from contemporary writing pedagogies rooted in current-traditional rhetoric. Elbow uses voice to celebrate power and to then attach expressivist pedagogy to that shared value.

Elbow's (1973) expressivist pedagogy presents dramatic challenges to what he describes as the dominant model of writing instruction, and the deployment of voice in celebration of power allows him to do this radical work. Power, as a value connected to

the metaphor of voice, in part fits the distinction of epideictic because it extends beyond the scope of this dissertation, which focuses on voice's epideictic impact on the field of composition studies. Although I focus on the connection between power and voice in composition and writing studies conversations in the latter half of the 20th century and examine the metaphor only across three major conversations, the connection between voice and power is far-reaching. In classical rhetoric, for example, Isocrates (2004; Livingstone, 1998) links voice to power and celebrates the idea of power conceptualized as a strong speaking voice. In his texts, power is inherently attached to voice and it is inherently *valued*. As in Isocrates' text, voice often stands in for the concept of power while, at the same time, strengthening adherence to power as a shared, universal value. As another example, the excerpt from the State of the Union address in Chapter 1 deploys voice as a metaphor *for* power, saying that groups of people want their voices to be heard. The value of power, conceptualized as 'being heard,' is understood by the audience as an already accepted, shared value. In these brief examples, power is not only understood through the metaphor of voice ("voice" stands in for "power"), it also serves the epideictic purpose of establishing communion with the audience through a celebration of the shared value of power. The voice metaphor, I argue, serves this same epideictic role in expressivist composition theory such as *Writing Without Teachers*, and my examination of this metaphor focuses on uncovering the adherence to power as a core value within Elbow's text and the discipline of composition at large.

Like in Isocrates' text and in the State of the Union Address, in expressivist theory, voice stands in for power at the same time that it constructs power as something to be

valued and celebrated. In Elbow's (1973) *Writing Without Teachers,* he presents a novel way to approach writing instruction, which he calls *the teacherless writing class*. The teacherless writing class aims to combat "the habit of compulsive, premature editing" which both keeps people from writing and which "makes writing dead" as the writer's "voice is damped out by all the interruptions" (p. 6). Dead writing, "interrupted" writing, is antithetical to power, which is both a universal value and fundamentally attached to voice. Elbow says that "in your natural way of producing words there is [...] a voice" and that this voice "is the main source of power" in any written text (p. 6). For Elbow, voice *is* power, and to dampen or stifle that voice is to dampen and stifle "the main source of power." For compositionists, power is an epideictic, universal value, and, for Elbow, power is inherently attached to voice. As such, voice both celebrates power and becomes, in itself, a celebrated element of writing.

Strengthening this connection between voice and power, along with the celebration of both as universal writing goals, Elbow (1973) says:

> Maybe you don't like your voice; maybe people have made fun of it. But it's the only voice you've got. It's your only source of power. You better get back into it, no matter what you think of it. If you keep writing in it, it may change into something you like better. But if you abandon it, you'll likely never have a voice and never be heard. (p. 6-7)

Voice is, here, explicitly connected to power, to the extent that power is unachievable without voice. In this quote, Elbow speaks directly to the reader, further establishing a sense of communion as he argues that voice is "your only source of power" and that "if

you abandon it, you'll likely never have a voice and never be heard." Again, Elbow uses voice not only to celebrate the value of power but to stand in for what is powerful in a text. Because Elbow devotes much of his introduction strengthening adherence to power and firmly linking power to voice, the reader (who, as he is interpolated by Elbow in this introduction, certainly has felt powerless the way Elbow describes and who certainly does not want to risk "never hav[ing] a voice and never be[ing] heard") the details of Elbow's writing practices are built upon this shared foundation and shared desire for power. As such, the reader is more likely to accept the premise that a teacherless classroom is a more powerful classroom, because this sense of communion has already been firmly established.

In addition to serving as the core, universal truth celebrated through the metaphor of voice, power is presented in Elbow's (1973) text as *the end goal of writing*. Rather than understanding writing in terms of current-traditional rhetoric or gatekeeping--another expression of how writing seems inherently attached to power--Elbow proposes a way to write outside of and against the University. Power, in this sense, is both celebrated and focused on the individual writer. Even the title of *Writing Without Teachers* expresses this desire to remove writing from traditional symbols of power or authority. By suggesting from the onset that there is a way to write "without teachers," Elbow establishes that power is deeply, inherently attached to writing, that power is an appropriate, valued end of writing, and that the main thing standing in the way of achieving power through writing is the inability to write which is often caused by the very institutions meant to teach writing. As such, Elbow's text deploys a rhetoric of anti-

gatekeeping, a common thread across expressivist texts. Voice, in these texts, serves this anti-gatekeeping function by detaching power from institutions and focusing instead on individual means for achieving power through writing.

Elbow (1973) promises that "The teacherless writing class" celebrates and promotes individual power as it "helps your writing by providing maximum feedback" (p. 3). He advocates this teacherless writing class as a way to get past the "anxiety" that keeps individuals from writing, framing writing as directly associated with realization of power. The teacherless writing class celebrates the already shared, universal value of power, and works to disassociate power from an institution (represented often in this text through the word "teachers") and instead stitch power to individual voice. I treat power in this chapter, and Chapters 3 and 4, as a universally shared value, inherently associated with writing instruction. Although the value of power, generally, is continually shared and celebrated across dissonant conversations, power is conceptualized differently among the authors discussed in this dissertation. Expressivist texts such as Elbow's conceptualize the shared value of power as inherently tied to an autonomous, natural, and authentic individual. In the following sections, I divide Elbow's expressivist conceptualizations of power into three distinct categories: power conceptualized as control, as resistance, and as "being heard."

**Power as control.** In this section, I identify the ways in which expressivist voice conceptualizes power in terms of individual control. Further, I examine how this value of power as control is positioned as a universal, eternal truth, and how this conceptualization further emphasizes the role of the writer (rather than the reader) in the celebration of

power. Elbow (1973) begins his preface to *Writing Without Teachers* by establishing power and control as closely linked and as universally sought after, saying that:

> Many people are now trying to become less helpless, both personally and politically: trying to claim more control over their own lives. One of the ways people most lack control over their own lives is through lacking control over words. Especially written words. (p. v)

In addition to immediately establishing "control" as a central, shared goal, this quote demonstrates the celebration of power, conceptualized as control, through epideictic means. Elbow makes this goal appear "eternal" and "universal" in saying that "many people" are engaged in this work of trying to gain control over their lives "both personally and politically," emphasizing that this goal is common and far-reaching, applying to many people across many aspects of their lives. The desire for control is something that "many people" have, and as such, valuing control is not a new, uncommon value. Elbow then stitches the value of control to writing more specifically, saying that "people most lack control over their own lives [...] through lacking control over words. Especially written words."

From the first line in his preface, Elbow (1973) celebrates power conceptualized as control as an uncontroversial value. While other values associated with voice receive more attention and more detailed explanation from Elbow, power as control is universal. The lack of attention, or lack of argumentation, surrounding the value of power as control contributes to its force as an epideictic value. Elbow universalizes power as a shared goal and value when he says that "This book tries to show how to gain control

over words" and that he is "trying to talk to all who want to work on their writing" which he feels is "a huge and diverse audience" (p. v). Again, Elbow establishes the goal of control and positions control both as directly connected with the act of writing (to write with power is "to gain control over words") and as an unquestionable, universal value (one shared by "a huge and diverse audience"). This preface exemplifies the epideictic strategy of establishing the fundamental value and resultant course of action as unquestionable and universal to the extent that this value calls the book's audience into being and establishes communion with that audience.

Elbow (1973) deploys another epideictic strategy in the above quoted text, celebrating the value of power as control by displacing the competing value or concept of helplessness. Helplessness, which Elbow argues most people face in their personal and political lives, is positioned directly counter to the active value of control. According to Elbow, helplessness is associated with not writing, with not having control over written words. Control, and power, are associated with writing, with "written words." Elbow further appeals to the universal sense of helplessness, saying that "Words come at you on a piece of paper and you often feel helpless before them" (p. v). The experience of helplessness when interacting with words sets up an epideictic foundation for Elbow's controversial proposal of the teacherless classroom. In this preface, Elbow draws on the shared value of power as control and the shared, universal fear of helplessness in order to establish communion with his audience. He repeats this appeal to helplessness, saying "when you want to put some words of your own back on another piece of paper, you often feel even more helpless" (p. v). This early and repetitive focus on helplessness is

an epideictic strategy, one that strengthens adherence to the value of power and the shared desire for control by making the *undesired* feeling of helplessness immediately present. Power, realized through control, is the celebrated value that displaces this helplessness.

Elbow (1973) identifies the value of "claiming control," which falls under the umbrella of power. For Elbow, the very act of writing is an act of control. Alongside control, power is often conceptualized in *Writing Without Teachers* as both an individual act of resistance and as inherently social. In other words, power, and power conceptualized as control, is also stitched to the values of resistance and of "being heard."

**Power as resistance.** In expressivist texts such as Elbow's (1973), power is not only conceptualized as control but also as control operationalized through the act of resistance against some dominant or conventional source of power. In these texts, voice not only celebrates power imagined through resistance but, as illustrated in Elbow's text, voice often directly *represents* or embodies resistance. In fact, Elbow's key argument in *Writing Without Teachers* is an appeal to understanding power, which is presented as a shared value, through resistance against anything that would prevent a writer from cultivating and using his own voice. Voice, in turn, is the means by which this resistance takes place. As such, Elbow frames power as a writer's individual resistance against competing voices, including dominant ways of knowing and powerful institutions that might either prevent an individual from writing at all or might dampen the individual's voice in the text he produces.

As I mentioned above, Elbow (1973) operationalizes power, and resistance, simply

through the act of writing. For Elbow and other expressivist pedagogues, any act of writing is, in part, inherently an act of resistance against the anxiety, and all its sources, that prevent individuals from finding their voice. Positioning writing as resisting barriers, Elbow says that "Anxiety keeps you from writing" and that the "cure" for this anxiety is "to damn the torpedoes and write" (p. 27). Overcoming anxiety is an act of resistance against institutions and voices that cause this anxiety, and as such, "to damn the torpedoes and write" is inherently an act of resistance. Writing, for Elbow, serves both as the means of resistance and the celebration of power achieved through resistance. Further, the phrase "damn the torpedoes" implicitly links writing and resistance, invoking images of war and of resisting an external enemy, of power achieved *against* another group. Although imagining writing as an act of resistance, specifically as resistance against dominant power structures, presents a radical understanding of writing pedagogy, by emphasizing the shared experience of "anxiety" and the shared desire for control, Elbow positions resistance as a similarly universal truth or shared value.

Expressivist texts conceptualize power in terms of resistance to construct a foundation of shared values and to build pedagogies of individual voice on that foundation. In addition to framing writing as resistance against a writer's own anxiety or mental roadblocks, Elbow (1973) constructs and celebrates as a shared value powerful writing understood as resistance to dominant institutions or to current-traditional models of gate-keeping. Positioned against what Elbow calls "The commonsense, conventional understanding of writing" which is "a two-step process" from meaning to language, Elbow's text advocates writing not as a way to secure power within dominant

institutional frameworks but, rather, writing as a means for resistance against these conventional methods for teaching writing. In the title, Elbow proposes something that is valued, "writing," and positions it against something that is also conventionally valued, "teachers." Teachers, in the title and in the book, stand in for the powerful, dominant institutions that dampen individual voice. Elbow sets up his teacherless classroom is powerful, and as capable of creating powerful writing, through his conceptualization of power as resistance of institutions.

Elbow (1973) advocates the teacherless classroom as a way to empower individuals by allowing them to overcome their anxieties and write. These anxieties are in part the result of what he calls the traditional teaching method, which emphasizes revision. Resistance to that method is conceptualized as empowering, and as powerful. He also emphasizes resistance to the university, to teachers through the term 'teacherless classroom' and focuses instead on what happens outside the university, among writing peers. According to Elbow, resistance is powerful because it allows the writer to write, and Elbow positions his method as powerful because it focuses on individual voice, which is the writer's main source of power. Throughout his text, power, resistance, and voice are stitched together, and the adherence to this value of power is strengthened. As power is positioned as contrary to teachers, or as resistance to traditional instructional methods, the epideictic celebration of power also works to strengthen adherence to resistance, even though this value, and certainly Elbow's curriculum, is in some ways the opposite of epideictic: it is working to overturn seemingly universal understandings of how writing should be taught.

In order to work against the common, accepted current-traditional pedagogical practices of his contemporaries, Elbow (1973) works to align these practices with universally negative experiences. Elbow deploys the epideictic tactic of displacing negative, "competing" values, such as assimilation or complicity, and thus displacing current-traditional pedagogy depicted as connected with these competing or negative values. For example, Elbow highlights the universal desire for power by emphasizing the universal *distaste* for and *struggle* brought on by powerlessness:

> It is the human condition that when we emit words in speaking or writing, we are sending out lots and lots of messages. The reason why our word production is so unpowerful and ineffective is that we let all those messages mush in together and get in each other's way. (p. 131)

According to Elbow, powerlessness is part of "the human condition," and the experience of "word production" as "unpowerful" is presented here as an eternal, universal truth. Since voice is the only source of our power, and since power is what everyone *wants* to achieve through writing, "voice" becomes not only a metaphor for power or even metonymy for the writer; "voice" becomes a metaphor for *what is valued or desired in a piece of writing,* since only through discovering and cultivating voice can an individual achieve communion with a reader. Without valuing voice, a writer seems doomed to powerlessness, letting "all those messages mush in together and get in each others' way." By establishing this lack of power and effectiveness as a universal struggle, Elbow strengthens adherence to the shared, eternal value and goal of writing that is powerful and effective.

Expressivist texts work to attach powerlessness to external forces that dampen individual voice. Elbow (1973) deploys the metaphor of voice to celebrate individual resistance that is operationalized through looking *inward,* through a process of nurturing a writer's individual voice. In other words, voice celebrates individual agency that is attached to "natural" or "authentic" identity, two values associated with power and discussed later in this chapter, by resisting inauthentic identity superimposed on the student by the institution, and by constant, premature editing. In this imagining of resistance, power is garnered through discovering and relying on one's unique, authentic voice. Voice here does the epideictic work of strengthening the adherence to valuing writing as resistance and writing as an enactment of power. Focusing on writing as an enactment of power and resistance, Elbow uses the voice metaphor to differentiate between distinct understandings of language's relationship to power, saying:

> The text lens foregrounds language as an abstract system (Saussure's langue) in which words have the same meaning whoever utters them in whatever context--words as interchangeable and not attached to persons; the voice lens highlights how language issues from individual persons and physical bodies and how the same words differ, depending on who says them and how (p. 7).

In this view, voice is attached to power and to the individual, and power is attained and imagined through a writer's individual resistance of the external influences that might compromise, paralyze, or dampen her voice. Elbow argues, in this text, that "the voice lens" is an appropriate way to focus on the ways that teaching writing, which is attached to the value of power and even at times synonymous with power, is concerned with

teaching an individual. Coming to power through writing is to focus on the individual and to resist the potential disruptions and barriers this individual might face, both internally and externally.

In addition to power conceptualized through resistance and through control, power is also understood in Elbow's (1973) text as inherently social. Although an individual must resist the anxiety caused by other voices, in order for a writer to operationalize power, and in order for writing to really be powerful, that writing must be read. Power is understood as both individual and as inherently social, since power is celebrated and conceptualized as "being heard" by a reader.

**Power as 'being heard.'** Expressivist pedagogy generally focuses on the individual; Elbow (1973) describes a pedagogy that relies on an individual writer, who is coherent and autonomous, looking inward in order to find power in his own voice. Despite this focus on the individual writer, expressivist texts such as Elbow's recognize the inherently social element of writing, and the metaphor of voice calls attention to not only the individual writer's quest for power but to this writer's dependency upon making a connection with a reader. Power, as such, is not only conceptualized as control and as resistance, two things which focus on the individual aspects of writing, but also as 'being heard,' which focuses on the social aspect of writing as power.

Just as he depicts the desire for control and the need for resistance as universal, as part of the human experience, Elbow (1973) argues that all people essentially want to be heard. The success of his method lies in the fact that participants "find themselves in a group where their words are heard and understood" and that they are finally able to "say

things that are complex and difficult to express which they had previously learned to ignore because it had always been impossible to get them heard" (p. 123). Here Elbow stresses the importance of being "heard and understood," a concept stitched to the metaphor of voice, and expresses being heard as both necessary and often difficult. The value of power conceptualized in terms of being heard is again attached specifically to the metaphor of voice, which Elbow uses to both celebrate these values and conceptualize them as at once personal (voice is a personal, individual quality) and social (having a voice is inherently attached to engaging in a conversation with a reader).

When conceptualizing power as being heard, Elbow (1973) again deploys the epideictic tactic of displacing competing values. Elbow frames power as an epideictic, universal value by emphasizing the universal *fear* of powerlessness, displacing this value with the celebrated competing value of power. Drawing on his audience's experience of this universalized, shared fear Elbow posits that "our worst fear [is] that our words were not heard at all" (p. 122). Again, Elbow establishes this fear as both universal and fundamental, saying that "our worst fear" is not being heard. Even in the negative statement, the positive value of "being heard" and understanding power as "social" is present in this quote. Earlier in his text Elbow contrasted the universal experiences of "fear" and "anxiety" with the positive value of power, so stating here that a universally held "worst fear" is that "our words were not heard at all" again links words being heard with realization of power. Each time Elbow refers to fears and anxieties, voice appears as the remedy. Voice, conceptualized as being heard and understood by a reader, represents not only power conceived of generally but also power as the specific remedies

to these fears.

Establishing that not being heard is the root of the worst fears and anxieties that prevent individuals from writing, Elbow (1973) positions expressivist pedagogies as one way to overcome these problems and cultivate voice. The readers in the teacherless classroom provide the writer with the empowering act of "being heard" by providing a space for the writer's voice to develop. Even while celebrating power as social, Elbow still works to disassociate teaching from learning (and so position his pedagogy against current-traditional pedagogies) by saying that "The better you get at feeling how your words affect consciousnesses, the better you will be at deciding *for yourself* whether your words are any good" (p. 105). Power has nothing to do with better, more correct grammar, and everything to do with "actually putting things inside real readers" (p. 109). Again Elbow hinges attaining power on cultivating writing that has a "real voice" so that it can "actually get through to other people" (p. 109). Elbow argues that audience is important, but teachers are not necessarily the correct audience, since in fact "Reading out loud brings the sense of audience back into your act of writing. This is a great source of power" (p. 83). In this quote, Elbow again emphasizes the expressivist focus on the individual writer, even as powerful writing must connect with an audience. Rather than relying on teachers for this sense of "being heard" the teacherless classroom replaces teachers with "real readers," which provides the means for each writer to "actually get through to other people" and to learn how to be a reader of her own texts.

Along with emphasizing the importance of the teacherless classroom, Elbow (1973) uses the method of freewriting as a way to "be heard" by cultivating a stronger, more

powerful voice. Elbow argues that his learning method of freewriting is an important element in overcoming anxiety, in writing more, and in writing more *powerfully*. Freewriting, according to Elbow, is successful in these endeavors because it invests in and cultivates the writer's voice. In his own description of freewriting, Elbow again strengthens adherence to the value of power through the metaphor of voice saying that "In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm--a voice--which is the main source of power in your writing" (p. 6). Voice is "the main source of power in your writing," and power is the main goal and most celebrated value. Elbow again emphasizes the link between power and being heard saying that "this voice is the force that will make a reader listen to you, the energy that drives the meanings through his thick skull" (p. 6). Once again, just as with the concepts of control and resistance, voice celebrates the conceptualization of power as "being heard," and, at the same time, voice is *the key element* in realizing or achieving that value.

Yet another example of Elbow (1973) stitching together the celebration of power, the operationalization of power as "being heard," and the metaphor of voice comes at the very beginning of his text, which I quoted in a previous section:

> [i]t's the only voice you've got. It's your only source of power. You better get back into it, no matter what you think of it. If you keep writing in it, it may change into something you like better. But if you abandon it, you'll likely never have a voice and never be heard. (p. 7)

For Elbow, without cultivating voice, a writer can "never be heard"; at the same time, voice is the "only source of power" for an individual writer. Again here Elbow draws on

the universal fear of not being heard in order to emphasize the importance of developing a voice, of being heard, and of achieving power through writing. This quote demonstrates how central a role voice plays as an epideictic metaphor, celebrating power as control, as resistance, and as being heard. In addition, this quote shows the deep connection between voice as a metaphor for power and as metonymy for an individual. The individual must develop a voice not only in one particular text, but as a *writer* must learn to develop her voice in order to achieve power and be heard, both in and beyond her writing. In the next section, I discuss voice's metonymic role in expressivist pedagogy and work to untangle voice as metonymy from voice as an epideictic metaphor.

**Power and metonymy.** In this section, I examine how Elbow (1973) uses voice metonymically, conceptualized as inherently attached to a coherent, authentic individual. In order to discuss voice as metonymic, I define metonymy and discuss the ways in which voice, in Elbow's text, functions as metonymy for a writer. Then, I specifically relate voice's metonymic function to its epideictic celebration of power. Voice's epideictic role and metonymic role are often conflated in expressivist texts and, even if not conflated, are deeply intertwined. In this section I work to untangle these concepts while still examining how they function together in order to create a celebration of not only a powerful *text* but of a more powerful *writer*.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) highlight the importance of metonymy, saying that it allows individuals to "organize our thoughts and actions" (p. 39). Further describing metonymy's important role in organizing and understanding the world, they describe it as "allow[ing] us to conceptualize one thing by means of its

relation to something else." (p. 39). As I've discussed in this chapter, voice, when deployed in expressivist texts as an epideictic metaphor, celebrates the value of power; at the same time, voice stands in for what *is powerful* about a text. Moreover, expressivist voice conceptualizes writing itself is an inherently powerful action, particularly when that writing is "heard." While voice functions as an epideictic metaphor in Elbow's (1973) text, voice also serves a metonymic function wherein the "voice" of a text is conceptualized through its relation to the writer of a text. As such, much of Elbow's text goes so far as to discuss the writer--represented and conceptualized through the term *voice*--as much as it discusses writing or written text. Because voice is powerful, voice also celebrates a conception of a writer as powerful, and achieving power in a text is intrinsically linked to achieving power personally, as an individual.

Throughout Elbow's (1973) text, voice plays this dual role of epideictic metaphor, celebrating such values as power, and metonymy, conceptualizing a text by its relation to an author. Because of its dual function, the celebrated values attached to the metaphor of voice become attached to the individual person who created the text. The connection the individual writer and the text can be seen in Elbow's focus on cultivating written "voice" (and through voice, enacting power), through an examination of the writer's experience. As an example of this focus on writer's experience, Elbow says that "the reason it feels like chaos and disorientation to write freely is because you are giving up a good deal of control" (p. 31). He recognizes that this control *feels* like power, giving one "reason for the persistence of the old model [of teaching writing]: it promises structure and control and that's just what you yearn for when you're having trouble with writing" (p. 72).

Here, power as control is a celebrated, epideictic value. At the same time, power and control are conceptualized not only through the text or the act of writing but also through *the writer's experience and feelings.*

As another example of Elbow (1937) discussing writing by focusing his discussion on the writer's experience, he says that "I used to find writing exhausting. Then I figured out how to grow and cook it. I still find writing exhausting. But now I write more and better and even finish things" (p. 69). Whether an author finds writing to be exhausting is a statement about the writer: her felt experience of exhaustion. However, expressivist texts like Elbow's link the writer's experience to what can be read or observed in the text itself. Further connecting the writer's experience with the written text, Elbow says that this method of writing practice "produces more force and voice in the words: this integrated texture is more clear and powerful [...] this is why freewriting can produce writing that is better than most slow careful writing" (p. 66). In this quote Elbow argues that the method of producing a text, and how this method is experienced by the writer as either "free" or as "slow" and "careful," impacts whether the text is powerful. A more empowered writer produces a more empowered text, and much of Elbow's method focuses not only on creating power in a text through voice, but on creating a more powerful *writer* by developing methods that cultivate his voice.

Elbow (1973) often discusses his own personal, felt experiences and struggles with writing, again as a way to establish communion with readers, but also in a way that continues to link the text to the individual, coherent, autonomous person creating the text. Elbow describes his own experience of feeling stuck, saying that these instances often

came from "trying to avoid the voice and self I now have" (p. 47). Here, Elbow takes an autobiographical approach in his discussion of writing, illustrating the degree to which voice links the text to an individual who creates the text; a project about writing is a *personal* project. In addition to linking the personal, individual writer to the text, Elbow uses voice to connect power to nature. This quote demonstrates voice's dual function of epideictic metaphor, celebrating the values attached to writing of power and nature, and metonymy, conceptualizing writing in terms of the individual writer. I argue towards the end of this chapter that because of this dual function these values, in addition to being attached to writing, are also attached to how an individual is valued. As such, there is a problematic conflation between voice as epideictic and voice as metonymy, which leads to essentialized identity.

**Power valued across conversations.** This chapter examines the epideictic function of the voice metaphor in expressivist pedagogy, both as epideictic and as metonymic. As such, I have focused on Elbow's (1973) text in order to demonstrate that the value of power--understood as control, as resistance, and as inherently social--is a shared, epideictic value celebrated through "voice." I argue that power is such a core value in the field of composition, and is such a "universal" way to understand writing, that even Elbow's critics both celebrate the value of power and conceptualize successful writing as powerful. Two prominent critics of Elbow's pedagogy specifically and of the celebration of the voice metaphor in composition more generally, Bartholowmae (1995) and Bowden (1999), still celebrate the value of power as a fundamental, epideictic goal of writing and writing instruction. Bartholowmae and Bowden agree that at least one

important goal in writing instruction is to get students to realize some kind of power through writing (as do the authors I discuss in Chapter Three). However, Bartholowmae and Bowden use this goal of achieving power as a key reason to critique pedagogies that rely on voice as the central metaphor for what we want students to do. Elbow argues that finding one's voice is the way of achieving power; in fact, he claims that there is no other way to have a voice than to develop the voice one is born with. Bartholowmae and Bowden, in different ways, critique this pedagogy as they claim that citationality is the most appropriate and empowering way for students to write themselves into an academic, written conversation.

Bartholowmae (1995), like Elbow (1973), argues that power is inherently social and that engaging in conversation is one way to conceptualize power. However, rather than engaging in a conversation with readers, Bartholowmae understands powerful writing as engaging in conversation with sources. Bartholowmae agrees that writing's end goal is power, and celebrates the value of power attached to writing in his critiques of Elbow. His critique is, indeed, rooted in this same epideictic value of power, as it argues that emphasis on voice is not the best way to empower students. I examine Bartholowmae and Bowden's (1999) texts more fully later in this chapter, arguing that power is still understood as a fundamental, universal value, and that voice is detached from power *because* of its attachment to nature and authenticity. In the following two sections I examine the more "novel" values introduced in *Writing Without Teachers*, which are often at the heart of criticisms against conceptualizing voice as Elbow does in his text.

Elbow's (1973) text builds upon this foundation of power, a value celebrated almost universally across even dissenting texts. Voice, along with celebrating the shared value of power, stitches this value to two other key celebrated values in expressivist texts: nature and authenticity. The individual conceptualized through an expressivist understanding of voice is natural and authentic, and nature and authenticity are necessary elements to achieving power. In the following sections, I analyze and articulate the ways in which Elbow celebrates nature and authenticity and the ways that he establishes these values as fundamentally connected to and necessary for the realization of power.

**Voice and Nature**

As I have argued thus far, Elbow (1973) uses voice as an epideictic metaphor, celebrating and strengthening adherence to shared values in order to achieve communion with an audience and present a pedagogy that breaks with current-traditional models. Elbow positions power as the most universal, unquestionable value. Along with power, Elbow stitches two more "novel" or "controversial" values to the metaphor of voice: nature and authenticity. In this section, I examine how voice celebrates the value of nature, and how a more natural voice is conceptualized as more powerful. In the following discussion, I first examine nature as a valued concept in expressivist rhetoric. I frame nature as celebrated, in Elbow's text, through a disassociation of teaching and learning. Then, I examine the ways that Elbow and other authors association writing and voice with the body through the use of organic language. Finally, I return to the value of power and articulate the expressivist connection between this fundamental value and a "natural," voiced text.

According to expressivist pedagogy, a voiced text is inherently a powerful text, and voice is inherently conceptualized as the writer's *natural voice.* As I quoted above, Elbow (1973) establishes the connection between voice and power early in his text by saying:

> Maybe you don't like your voice; maybe people have made fun of it. But it's the only voice you've got. It's your only source of power. You better get back into it, no matter what you think of it. If you keep writing in it, it may change into something you like better. But if you abandon it, you'll likely never have a voice and never be heard. (p. 6-7)

As I established in the previous section of this chapter, power is positioned throughout this text as a shared, universal value. Elbow does not need to convince his readers that they want to achieve power, nor that this power comes through making a connection with a reader. Elbow can (likely correctly) already assume that his audience wants to write, that they've had difficulty writing in the past, and that feeling powerless or voiceless is already a cause for anxiety. What he builds from these shared values--gaining power through gaining a voice--is the argument that returning to one's natural voice is *the only way to achieve this power*. Telling his readers that if they "abandon it [their natural voice]" they will "likely never have a voice and never be heard" is almost threatening, as he deploys the epideictic tactic of displacing competing values in order to boost the desired, celebrated value. Since his readers already celebrate the value of power, the universal fear of never achieving power due to abandoning natural voice in turn establishes nature as another shared, celebrated expressivist value.

Elbow (1973), throughout his text, uses metaphors that connect voice with both the concept of human nature (i.e., an innate, inescapable truth that guides individual human behavior) and the natural world (i.e., any thing or process that happens organically); as such, he celebrates the *value* of nature while actively displacing anything that could be categorized as artificial or inorganic. One important example that Elbow places in the category of nature is *learning*, while a key example that he displaces as unnatural is *teaching*. Even the title, *Writing Without Teachers,* indicates a valuation of writing and a devaluation of teachers. As I mentioned previously, he calls his method *the teacherless classroom*, still valuing learning (through the term classroom) while disassociating learning from teachers. Just as Elbow works to conceptualize power in various ways, he works to conceptualize certain things as either natural or unnatural, while strengthening adherence to the value of nature and displacing anything that falls into the "unnatural" category. Below, I discuss how Elbow works to celebrate nature by disassociating teaching and learning, conceptualizing learning as "natural" and teaching as "unnatural" and thus antithetical to a powerful voice.

**Disassociation of teaching and learning.** In order to argue for a "teacherless classroom" and a writing pedagogy that breaks with current-traditional writing instruction, Elbow (1973) separates the valued concept of learning with the concept of teaching. Elbow conceptualizes learning as a natural, organic process. Teaching, rather than being organically linked to learning, is conceptualized as *unnatural* and, in fact, often antithetical to the natural process of learning to write. Specifically, one of the key concepts that Elbow works to displace by framing it as counter to the value of nature is

the concept of "teachers." Elbow says in his introduction that the anxiety individuals so often feel when they want to write but cannot write--which inhibits their ability to gain power through reaching an audience--tends to be *learned* rather than *natural*. Illustrating the naturalness of pre-teacher writing, he says that "Little children of four, five, and six write eagerly and with pleasure if they are simply encouraged to do so [...] They love it and find it easy" (p. xii). He goes on to say that even though formal education tends to beat this pleasure of writing out of them, "a desire to write still lurks in almost anyone" (p. xii). This natural pleasure that teachers are unable to "beat [...] out of us" becomes, from the introduction, the biggest value attached to "voice"; it is through a celebration and cultivation of a writer's natural voice, and a realization that teachers so often work against that voice, that writers achieve their ultimate goal of powerful writing.

Connecting power, an established, shared value, with nature allows Elbow (1973) to conceptualize nature as another universal value. Voice, used as an epideictic metaphor, connects power and nature to each other and to itself. This epideictic work allows for the more controversial argument to remove learning from teaching, since this argument is rooted in shared values. The "universal value" or "eternal truth" that Elbow turns on its head is the truth that if one values learning, one values the institution of learning--one must value teachers. By focusing so much on the value of *nature* through an emphasis on the individual's nature, Elbow works to undo the association between learning and teaching. Voice is deployed as the epideictic metaphor that connects power and nature. Elbow emphasizes "how often people learn without or in spite of teaching, and how often people teach without producing learning" in the introduction. Before

gaining the audience's adherence for his specific method of the "teacherless classroom," he spends considerable time early in his book both attaching the values of "natural" versus "artificial" to the established values of "empowered individuals" versus "disempowered or disenfranchised individuals. Further, he conceptualizes "learning" as natural and as powerful and "teaching" as unnatural or working against nature and, thus, working against power. Teaching and learning, which his audience would likely understand as associated concepts, are disassociated from one another and "teaching" is displaced through its connection with anxiety and disempowerment.

After laying this epideictic groundwork in his introduction, Elbow (1973) begins his first chapter by saying that "The most effective way I know to improve your writing is to do freewriting exercises regularly" (p. 3). He discusses freewriting throughout the book at length, characterizing it as natural or "automatic" writing and contrasting it with the kind of writing that edits out natural voice. Further disassociating teaching and learning, Elbow associates "teaching" with "editing," which actively works against "learning" (as well as against celebrating the values of power and nature). Elbow attaches institutions, which teachers represent, to anxiety and editing, which work against voice, against nature, and against realization of individual power. Rather than depicting the institution as a composite of individuals, or the individual as a composite of institutional values or learned and adopted institutional behaviors, Elbow values imagines and values voice as *inherently natural.* He argues that while a voice can be changed or adjusted, abandoning one's natural voice means that "you'll likely never have a voice and never be heard." Since abandoning one's natural voice means abandoning one's chance

ever to be heard, this quote demonstrates the extent to which Elbow attaches individual agency to the development of voice; further, according to Elbow, although teachers and educational institutions promise to imbue a student with agency and power through writing instruction, if the student completely loses *her own voice* to the voice of the institution, she can never really speak.

Elbow (1973) describes his process of writing against the institution--freewriting--saying that:

> The habit of compulsive, premature editing doesn't just make writing hard. It also makes writing dead. Your voice is damped out by all the interruptions, changes, and hesitations between the consciousness and the page. In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm--a voice--which is the main source of power in your writing. (p. 6)

Here, he aligns "habit" and "compulsive, premature editing" with the institution, with teaching, and with teachers. The use of the word "habit" calls to mind something that is learned, which has already been established as working against that which we (the speaker and his audience) value: nature. This habit "doesn't just making writing hard. It makes writing dead."

Throughout the text, Elbow (1973) uses the term "organic" along with other bodily metaphors in order to strengthen the audience's adherence to the value of nature. Here, understanding writing as "dead" again works to strengthen adherence to writing that is *alive,* and the only writing that is alive is writing that draws on, rather than fights against, a writer's "voice." He says that these "interruptions, changes, hesitations" all add to that

anxiety that so often keeps people from writing at all, and if you manage to write through them still "your voice is damped out." He virtually defines "voice" in this text, calling it "a sound, a texture, a rhythm [...] which is the main source of power in your writing." Here, we can see how he overtly pulls in this metaphor that, I argue, celebrates pre-established, eternal, universal values, just as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) say epideictic oratory does.

Once establishing that nature and power are shared values to be celebrated, and after attaching these values to the "voice" metaphor, Elbow (1973) continues to stress the importance of turning away from the traditional method of editing oneself and towards cultivating and growing "voice" instead. He draws on other natural metaphors, saying that freewriting allows for "a set of words that grows organically out of a thought or feeling or perception" (p. 8) and calls his second chapter "The Process of Writing--Growing" (p. 12). He pushes against the unnatural but typical way that writing is conceived of, asking his readers to "think of writing as an organic, developmental process" during which you "grow and cook a message" (p. 15). He describes the kind of growth that the reader should expect out of his method of freewriting as "a fetus in a mother's belly"; it is natural and organic, but requires "change" that comes not through focusing on editing but rather on cultivating and shaping the writer's "voice" (p. 32). Elbow admits that a lot of what changes through this process is not just the words on the page but the person behind those words; this process of freewriting and feedback through his teacherless class changes and grows and develops the *writer*, not just the *text she produces*. This focus on the person when teaching writing is not uncommon across most

composition theory. Likewise, pedagogical training often focuses on the individual: an entire movement is described as "student-centered" as opposed to "student-text-centered" or even "student-writing-centered." Voice is, in Elbow's text, attached to the individual's natural self, and by extension, attached to the body.

**Voice and the body.** The metaphor of voice, in expressivist texts, values nature by linking the concept of power (voice=power) to the physical, organic body. Authors other than Elbow (1973), including Johnson (2005) and Bowden (1999), tie voice to an active valuing of nature and to idealized concepts of "organic" and "body." Elbow describes his process of becoming a more powerful writer through freewriting as "the developmental growth cycle for living cells" and uses terms like "organic" and "growing" again and again (p. 40). While disassociation of teaching and learning is a more novel conceptualization of the value of nature, conceptualizing the body as natural and as inherently linked to powerful writing, and using the metaphor of voice to do this work, has a long tradition in the field of composition (Bowden, 1999; Elbow, 1994a). For example, Johnson's article "Writing with the Ear" attaches the "voice" metaphor to the natural body, thus using "voice" to celebrate and value the most essential, natural, pure elements of "the self." Johnson looks at how audiences "hear" a text by examining metaphors attached to aurality. He makes a similar move to Elbow and Lanham, saying that readers *instinctively* look for natural sound in a text. He naturalizes this notion by connecting the process of reading and writing and of valuing texts directly to the body, saying that even when we read silently our vocal chords are still doing something--we are still reading the way we might read out loud. (Bowden, in her critique of the voice

metaphor, actually brings up a similar idea when she discusses the strangeness of St. Augustine because he was able to read silently in a culture that understood reading as happening through the physical voice.)

Attaching power to the "natural" voice happens through an emphasis on *sound* or *rhythm* in a text. As such, voice, conceptualized as natural and as powerful, is tied to the body both through its connection with the physical voice and with the ear. Both Lanham (2007) and Johnson (2005) discuss the importance of sound in text, citing the ancient Sophists, who often used music in instruction. Johnson establishes the connection between voice and the body by citing "This interest of the ancient Sophists in the power of carefully organized sound to incite feeling and movement--call it e/motion--persists in modern rhetoric." Johnson further universalizes the importance of sound, specifically, saying that Burke's "Rhetoric of Motives" focuses on the effectiveness and use of anticipation and release as tied up with certain sounds. Connecting Burke and the Sophists, thus establishing voice as a universal value shared across two distant conversations and as foundational going all the way back to the beginnings of his discipline, Johnson says that "in short, Burke knew what the Sophists knew: style is more than aesthetic ornament." Like Elbow (1973), he celebrates the naturalness and primacy of voice by claiming that humans (appealing to universal, eternal truths) come to language *first* through orality and aurality. Johnson again celebrates the value of nature through an emphasis on the body, and on organic, natural development of the body, saying that hearing is the first sense humans develop, since even in the womb humans can make sense of the external world by hearing what's going on "outside." Making human

organic development present in his discussion of textual voice further establishes the naturalness of voice in text, since it is compared to the naturalness of human in-utero development. By likening this organic bodily development to how individuals interact with written texts, Johnson further conceptualizes voice as natural and as universal. Elbow, too, uses organic development as a metaphor for improving writing in order to establish voice as inherent and natural. Use of such metaphors thus celebrate nature as an epideictic value, celebrated through the metaphor of voice and necessary for achieving the previously established universal value of power.

While Elbow (1973) celebrates the value of nature and attaches voice to what's natural, Johnson (2005) stresses nature by looking closely at human nature and how language develops. Johnson argues that:

> The ear continues to play a vital and prominent, if subliminal, role in our experience of identifying and weighing values and meanings. We engage the ear precisely this way when we play around with prose style in an attempt to move our readers. (p. 272)

Here Johnson even ties the ear to one's literal ability to find values and meaning in writing. According to Johnson, an individual "listens" to texts, naturally, and this ability to listen to texts is an essential element in making meaning with a text. The emphasis on listening and using the metaphor of "the ear" again ties textual voice to the body and to nature. Use of the second person plural throughout his text conceptualizes this experience as universal. Elbow conceptualizes power as "being heard," and here Johnson illustrates the ear's role in "an attempt to move our readers." In both cases, power and

nature are stitched together, as valuing nature allows a writer (or writing instructor) to make powerful connections with a reader. Nature is conceptualized as a universal value, in part by attaching powerful writing to the writer's body.

**Voiced text as powerful text.** From the beginning of his text, Elbow (1973) celebrates the value of power and establishes writing's main goal as empowering individuals by allowing them to take control of their lives. Similarly, Johnson emphasizes the importance of powerful writing using the term "intensity." Just as cultivating "voice" in text is the only way to make writing more powerful for Elbow, Johnson insists that a useful way to cultivate intensity in one's writing is through learning to write "with the ear." So, Johnson's piece advocates training students to write with their ear, to "listen" to their texts the way that readers will naturally "listen" for voice in the texts they read. He encourages students to cultivate intensity by learning to use their ears and models the kind of listening he wants them to do by listening to them during class discussion as one way to model the kind of listening that should take place as readers of their own writing. Elbow's teacherless classroom similarly provides "listeners" to help cultivate natural voice so that a piece of writing can develop into a more powerful text. Power, the most valued quality in text *as well as* the main goal of writing any text, is connected to voice, which for Elbow and Johnson is conceptualized as natural. For these authors, voiced texts are more powerful texts, as they are more capable of connecting with readers, and a text that celebrates this value of nature will contain more voice.

As I mentioned previously, the connection between *nature* and *body* is important

not only because of the epideictic role that the metaphor of voice plays in these texts but also because voice functions as metonymy for the writer who creates that text. Johnson (2005) links the text to an author's natural, physical body while at the same time establishing the voiced text's role in linking distinct bodies to one another, saying that:

> Through the ear, we achieve this inward focus and flexibility; we breathe new openings back into the dancing sea of intensities, the tossing harmonies of our flesh so that they may coalesce and heighten and flow forth to move and change other bodies. In short, what might seem a private, even solipsistic, endeavor is in fact fully rhetorical, even political. (p. 280)

This language echoes Elbow's (1973) description of writing as both intensely personal and ultimately, organically, social, or "fully rhetorical, even political," since its goal is to get through to another reader and thus enact some power. However, the process through which a writer achieves this rhetorical power is very much concerned with looking inward and with recognizing and drawing out one's natural voice. Voice imbues a text with power, and voice is conceptualized through and attached to the value of nature. Essentially, both Elbow and Johnson position the universal, eternal value of power as dependent upon the more novel value of nature. I argue that the work of attaching nature to power, through the metaphor of voice, positions these authors to celebrate nature as an eternal, universal value and positions their pedagogies, which emphasize natural processes for developing voice, as in line with powerful writing. In the next section, I explore how Elbow similarly celebrates adherence to the value of authenticity by stitching it to the value of power through the epideictic metaphor of voice.

**Voice and Authenticity**

In addition to celebrating the values of power and nature, which are connected to one another through the epideictic metaphor of voice, Elbow (1973) celebrates the value of authenticity. After describing his pedagogy as natural, Elbow says in large, capitalized text:

> PEOPLE LEARN FROM THE TRUTH
>
> EVEN THOUGH THE TRUTH IS A MESS (Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers*, p. 133).

The visual impact, through the font size and style, of this statement indicates that this is an important concept for Elbow's pedagogy. Further, the declarative statement "people learn from the truth" establishes this concept as a universal fact. I understand an emphasis on truth, and the internal quality of authorial honesty, as part of the valuation of authenticity.

Authenticity is a very close, but, I argue, distinct, value from nature or naturalness that is also attached to voice and that is a key element in the association of voice and power. While the value of nature emphasizes something inherent in the writer, the value of authenticity emphasizes something like honesty. In other words, I argue that a voice might be authentic without being natural, since authenticity or honesty may not come naturally to a person. Authenticity is a value more closely linked to a judgment on the writer--the writer chooses whether to be authentic. However, authenticity and nature or naturalness are very closely linked. The key distinction that I see in Elbow's (and others') text is that valuing nature helps to determine *how* a writer becomes more

powerful, whereas valuing authenticity relies on the reader making a judgment about the writer based on what the reader marks as "authentic" in the text. I distinguish nature, one value celebrated through Elbow's (1973) use of voice, as residing inside the writer, and Elbow's valuing of nature focuses on the ways that a writer develops and cultivates her voice. I mark the value of authenticity, on the other hand, as something Elbow frames as identifiable by the reader. Elbow's conceptualization of authenticity has less to do with development and process and more to do with what a reader finds valuable in a finished product. Further, although "authenticity" is one of three key values that I identify as celebrated through the "voice" metaphor, it is also a value that characterizes this entire conception of voice. In other words, this value is doing "double duty"—it is one of three major values attached to the metaphor of voice, but it is also key in understanding voice as metonymy for the self. It is also often valued over nature and even over power; an inauthentic voice might be the worst possible offense, and it might completely destroy any chances of creating powerful writing through connecting with a reader. I also identify "authenticity" as a value that is *most* commonly stressed and celebrated in other texts that discuss voice, and is the most commonly *critiqued* value in texts criticizing this metaphor.

Like nature, the value of authenticity is a more novel, and more frequently troubled, value in Elbow's (1973) text. However, it is not a value completely unique to Elbow, and is, like nature, frequently associated with the metaphor of voice. In Yancey's (1994) collection *Voices on Voice,* Toby Fulwiler reflects that his experience with others who use *voice* to describe his writing has tended to refer to detected authenticity in his content

and style. Fulwiler depicts the debate surrounding the metaphor of voice as a constructivist view of voice vs. the social constructionist view of voice. According to Fulwiler, the constructivists include such scholars as Peter Elbow and Don Murray, and are heavily influenced by the works of Jean Piaget. This camp understands voice as "emerging primarily from within" (p. 36). He claims that this side of the debate equates voice with uniqueness of an individual and argues that there is something natural about a writer's voice in a text. Social constructionists, on the other hand, emphasize that "we write or speak...within social contexts which make (nurture) our voices what they are" (p. 36). Fulwiler claims that this view is influenced by Lev Vygotsky, "who believes the self emerges primarily from without" (p.36). Compositionists who fall into this later camp include Ken Bruffee and David Bartholomae. According to Fulwiler, such scholars believe that voice has more to do with a reflection of a given discourse community or social structures than with an authentic, inner self.

Departing now from Fulwiler's (1994) text, I note that both "camps," as described, attribute voice to the authentic self. While only constructivists tightly knit voice to nature, both constructivists and social constructionists link voice to an authentic self. This connection of voice to the self echoes Lanham's (2007) characterization of voiced styles in text, since voice is connected to that social aspect of written communication that looks or listens for the person behind the text. Fulwiler questions, when people say that they really liked or were tuned into his voice in a piece of writing, "Are they saying something about my voice--hence my values and beliefs--or are they saying something more superficial about style?" (p. 37). Even here, "voice" is attached to something deep

within or authentic to the person, his "values and beliefs." Contrasted with "voice" is "something more superficial" that can be observed in written style but is not necessarily authentic to the writer of the text. Like Elbow's (1973) book, Fulwiler understands and has experienced "voice" as a metaphor that establishes a binary between the Self and the Institution, celebrating the authentic self and displacing the institution when it infects the self with inauthenticity.

**Critics of Individual Voice**

As much as the metaphor of voice has served the important function of developing and celebrating the shared values of composition studies, it has been contentiously debated for its use in various pedagogies and for the way in which it conceptualizes writers (and students). I posit that the criticisms of individual voice still celebrate the epideictic value of power but challenge the values of nature and authenticity as the best ways to achieve this power. Bartholomae (1995) challenges Elbow's (1973) strategies for realizing individual power through writing, but in so doing conceptualizes voice in the same way as Elbow. Bartholomae deploys a similar use of "voice" by linking this metaphor to the individual, authentic, univocal subject and contrasting it to other writing-as-power practices, saying, "Of course we can help the student to work on this essay by letting her believe it is hers--to think that the key problem is voice, not citation" (p. 67). Of course, he argues that the problem is not really a matter of voice if voice is conceptualized as authentic, natural, and tied to a coherent autonomous individual. Bartholomae challenges the idea that voice is an appropriate way to conceptualize power, but in so doing strengthens adherence to the value of power *and* strengthens the

conceptualization of voice as natural and as authentic.

In his critique of Elbow, Bartholomae (1995) articulates a familiar celebration of power and power conceptualized as inherently attached to writing:

> Thinking of writing as academic writing makes us think of the page as crowded with others--or it says that this is what we learn in school, that our writing is not our own, nor are the stories we tell when we tell the stories of our lives--they belong to TV, to Books, to Culture and History. To offer academic writing as something else is to keep this knowledge from our students, to keep them from confronting the power politics of discursive practice, or to keep them from confronting the particular representations of power, tradition and authority reproduces whenever one writes. (p. 63-63)

Here, the concept of voice is positioned as inherently contrary to academic writing, while at the same time is conceptualized in the same way as in Elbow's text. For both Elbow (1973) and Bartholomae voice celebrates something that is natural and authentic to the writer; the writer's textual voice is positioned against the concept of textual citationality, or against the other, competing voices. While Elbow positions this conceptualization of the voice metaphor as conducive to writerly and textual power or force, Bartholomae argues that academic writing gains its power through adept utilization of the other voices. Despite Elbow's reasoning, Bartholomae claims that power comes from citation of these other voices, not through resistance to other voices. While these authors disagree on the usefulness of voice as a composition metaphor, voice is in both texts connected to the values of nature and authenticity. Both texts, too, share the epideictic celebration of

power, and in fact use this celebration as the crux of their arguments.

Like Bartholomae (1995), Bowden (1999) critiques the use of the voice metaphor in composition theory and practice while still celebrating the shared value of power. Like Elbow and Bartholomae, Bowden conceptualizes voice as inherently natural and authentic, but she questions whether these qualities are appropriate means of achieving power, particularly for individual students across diverse speaking and writing backgrounds. For many of the reasons that Elbow argues teaching with a focus on individual voice "works," Bowden says this way of teaching "doesn't work" for many students and for most valued academic genres. Bowden criticizes the move that "voice" makes to both celebrate what is natural and to determine that spoken language is more natural than written language. She argues that connecting spoken language with naturalness and fluency, and connecting this naturalness and fluency with an authentic inner self, is harmful for students who do not speak naturally, who cannot "speak onto the page" in a way that is valued by readers.

**The Fallout of Voice as Epideictic and Voice as Metonymy**

As I have illustrated in this chapter, the metaphor of voice serves the epideictic role of establishing and celebrating shared values in order to establish communion with an audience. In addition to this epideictic function, voice functions as metonymy for an autonomous, coherent individual who created the text. While these can be understood as two distinct roles that *voice* plays in composition texts, it can be difficult to separate voice as an epideictic *metaphor* and voice as *metonymy*. Because its metaphorical and its metonymic function could easily be confused or conflated, the values celebrated through

the metaphor of voice, particularly nature and authenticity, can become values attached to an individual. In other words, rather than judging textual voice as powerful, natural, or authentic, the *writer* is judged and measured against the celebrated values and qualities of being powerful, natural, or authentic. Further, particularly as nature and authenticity are celebrated as eternal, universal values, one uptake of the voice metaphor which celebrates these values is the essentialization, and ultimately the evaluation, of the writer's identity.

To illustrate this potential uptake or result from the conceptualization of the writer through the voice metaphor, I examine student quotes that I presented at the beginning of this chapter and which I present again here:

> "I think that I was intimidated by the authority of my sources, and I was not able to give my own input on the topic."
>
> "Reading Turkle and the forum discussions, however, made me strive to be genuine and to be as true to myself as possible in writing, even when writing a research paper."
>
> (First Year Writing student final reflections on the course)

In the first quote, the student reflects on why she had previously been unable to see her own "voice" as a valuable part of the research papers she had written in school. The student describes herself as unable to "give [her] own input" on her paper's topic because she was "intimidated by the authority of [her] sources." The authors I focus on in this chapter, who I argue use "voice" as metonymy for the whole individual subject responsible for a text, tend to position the "voice" of the student author against the "voices" of authority that come through in a research paper's citations. Whether students

should be taught to focus on bringing out her "voice" or leaning on these "voices of authority" is a tug of war that I explore in this chapter among these authors who inherently link voice to the individual and who conceptualize the individual as distinct from these other voices.

The second quote highlights the way in which being "genuine" or "true to myself" is often valued in writing. Further, the addition of the phrase "even when writing a research paper" hints as the same conflict from the first student's response. There is a conflict between the voice of the writer (which is natural, or uncorrupted by outside influence, or authentic) and the voices of authority (which the student writer might find in the scholarly, published sources that we must rely on to support our claims in a research paper, or which we can find represented in the teacher or the institution of the university itself). Along with this conflict between the writer's voice and other voices, that small phrase "even when writing a research paper" shows the ways in which "voice" is often tied to specific genres, or specific writing situations. Just as the students in the PEW research study did not consider writing they did outside the classroom to be writing at all, this quote gestures to the phenomenon that "voice," when used as metonymy for the individual self, is often tied to specific genres, which is a major element of Bowden's (1999) critique against the use of the metaphor of voice in composition studies.

I argue that the way the voice metaphor functions in composition theory in the texts I explore in this chapter is particularly interesting because, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, it is both serving as metonymy for the individual and as a metaphor to describe a particular kind of style that is actually observable in a text that is akin to a spoken style associated

with an individual's physical, literal voice. As a "metaphor," voice allows us to have conversations about specific qualities of a text that we generally find appealing. As metonymy, it links the essence of the writer--not only certain qualities or characteristics about how that writer communicates, but the writer's whole subjectivity--to the text itself. For a student to be "intimidated" by the sources she uses to the point of feeling unable to "give her own input," she is conceptualizing texts as individuals whose conversations and claims she must carefully navigate in order to understand where her own beliefs or thoughts fit among these others. "Voice," when deployed in a way that attaches the individual to the text, is part of this conceptualization of what the student writer's potential relationship with other texts and with her own text might be. When a student "strive[s] to be genuine and to be as true to [her]self as possible in writing, *even when writing a research paper,*" truth is linked to personal truth, and this type of personal truth and authenticity are inherently understood as valuable. If the two student responses are looked at together, it's possible to make the connection between, on the one hand, how the world of academic research writing can be intimidating and how, on the other hand, a student has the potential to regain power when navigating this world.

In addition to the critiques of voice made by Bartholomae (1995) and Bowden (1999) that I discussed in the previous section, essentializing identity is possibly one of the trickiest ways that this metaphor can so quickly turn from celebrating what is powerful in writing to reducing an individual to whatever a reader marks as "authentic" in a text. Royster's (1996) "When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own" explores dangers of understanding voice as a celebration of individual identity attached to the

identity that is singularly natural and, as such, unchangeable. Multiplicity of identity, rather than understood as appropriate or even inevitable, can instead be imagined as inauthentic and unnatural. Royster says that "Adopting subjectivity as a defining value [...] is instructive. However, the multidimensionality of the instruction also reveals the need for a shift in paradigms, a need that I find especially evident with regard to the notion of 'voice,' as a central manifestation of subjectivity" (p. 30). Royster expresses here what I have illustrated through Elbow (1973) and Bartholomae's texts, that authentic, natural subjectivity is a shared, celebrated value attached to voice. Bowden critiques this very value celebrated by voice as, according to her, it only allows students and teachers to find value in texts that are expressions of authentic subjectivities. By extension, certain genres (likely not most academic genres) are more likely valued as are certain authorial identities: those judged to be authentic by whatever markes "authentic" for the reader. Valuing authenticity is not inherently troublesome; however, once this value is operationalized by a *reader,* it becomes too easy for identity to become essentialized and judged in a way that is actually counter to Elbow's pedagogy and counter to the celebration of the value of power, which is realized by a writer's ability to "be heard."

Royster (1996) draws from her own experience of having been "read" and, subsequently, judged according to the value of authenticity. Reflecting on this experience she critiques the widespread conceptualization of voice as metonymy, and the assumption that her own voice is "a central manifestation of subjectivity" (p. 30). Royster describes a moment when a colleague approached her after a talk to thank her

for using her "authentic" voice, using words like "relaxed" and "natural" in her praise of this voice. Royster illustrates her discomfort with the problematic assumption that the colleague both *knew* Royster's natural voice and her colleague's conceptualization of voice as natural, authentic, and by extension singular and valued. The colleague mentioned how refreshing it was to hear Royster speak without "appropriated academic language" (p. 37). Royster pushed back, clarifying that she had a "range of voices" and insisting "all my voices are authentic" (p. 37). Her colleague replied "'But this time, it was really you. Thank you.'" (p. 37). Royster's colleague, I argue, celebrates the value of power, nature, and authenticity in this brief exchange, implying in her "thanks" that Royster's most powerful voice is the voice that can be read as most authentic and natural. A voice that has "appropriated" other language is not as valued by this colleague, and indeed her use of the word "appropriated" further strengthens adherence to the values of authenticity and nature, while assuming that there is a clear distinction between an "appropriated" voice and an authentic one. This exchange illustrates how far-reaching and deeply entrenched these values celebrated through the metaphor of voice are, as even the author's own objection cannot shake the colleague's joyful celebration at having identified and been moved by an authentic, natural, and as such powerful, voice.

This encounter, Royster's (1996) discomfort with it, and her response to it demonstrate how voice celebrates and strengthens these already deeply ingrained notions of subjectivity. That her colleague was comfortable enough to judge which was Royster's authentic "self" ("this time, it was really you") even after Royster insists that this was no more her than any of her other texts might serve as a parallel to how teachers

of writing must approach "voice" in a student text, and how a student might feel about the reader rendering such definite conclusions. "Voice" as a way to explain writing to students might be as useful and even practical as Elbow suggests when it comes to encouraging people to write, but does it help them get heard? The colleague is making obvious judgments about Royster's subjectivity--not only that this voice is her "real" voice, but also that this is her "preferred" voice, going so far as to express gratitude and to perhaps read Royster's response that she feels comfortable speaking in a range of voices as authorial failure to recognize or accept credit for a job well done.

I see this troublesome encounter as a manifestation of conflating voice as epideictic metaphor and voice as metonymy for a writer. The problem with using "voice" as a metaphor that strengthens a discipline's adherence to the value of subjectivity lies in attaching a certain expectation about authenticity and style not only to what can be contained within a text but *to the writer as a human being*. Furthermore, not all authentic voices are equally valued, because not all subjects are equally valued. Elbow (1973) insists that cultivating one's innate, natural, authentic voice is "your only source of power." Using this premise to work with writers gives writers the power to feel ownership over their words, to overcome anxieties keeping them from writing, and to connect with readers. However, this same premise, in the reader's hand, means that the reader is making judgments not only about the textual voice but about the nature and authenticity of the *writer*. As in Royster's (1996) case, this encounter left her feeling unempowered and unable to take ownership over her own sense of an authentic voice.

**Conclusions**

Peter Elbow's (1973) text *Writing Without Teachers* illustrates the way in which voice serves as an epideictic metaphor in composition and writing theory. Voice is a central concept to Elbow's pedagogy, and in order to persuade his readers he attaches voice to the shared, universal value of power. Voice becomes, in Elbow's pedagogy, a writer's way to achieve power, as well as the reader's way to mark or judge a text as powerful. As I demonstrated in this chapter, Elbow's text celebrates many key values in order to establish communion with his reader, and the three values I identify as most important for his argument are power, nature, and authenticity, with power serving as the cornerstone or base for that communion. This celebration of power allows him to introduce nature and authenticity in terms of their relationship to achieving power; these values are stitched together, celebrated by, and strengthened through the metaphor of voice.

As voice serves this epideictic purpose, it also functions as metonymy for a coherent, autonomous individual whose *presence* in a text makes that text more powerful and, as such, more valuable. Taken together, voice's function as epideictic and as metonymic makes it a particularly controversial metaphor in composition as it runs the risk of displacing competing values and of attaching these values of nature and authenticity to an individual. Critics of Elbow's use of voice such as Bowden (1999) argue that an emphasis on nature and authenticity position power as not more achievable but ultimately less achievable, since in some way individuals are stuck with their natural voices. Furthermore, cultural and political forces have already marked certain voices as more or less valuable, and cultivating a voice that does not already fit into a position of

power does not, as Elbow (1973) claims, help that writer. Bartholomae (1995) makes this argument in his insistence that power comes not in cultivating natural voice but in teaching students to leverage other, more powerful, voices in their own work. Finally, Royster (1996) gives an example of the problematic way that nature and authenticity, celebrated as universal and eternal values deeply embedded in composition's reliance on voice, lead to essentializing identity and actually "shutting down" writerly voice rather than empowering it.

In *Talking Back*, bell hooks (1989) says that, as a college student, she:

> learned a notion of 'voice' as embodying the distinctive expression of an individual writer. Our efforts to become poets were to be realized in this coming into awareness and expression of one's voice. In all my writing classes, I was the only black student. Whenever I read a poem written in the particular dialect of southern black speech, the teacher and fellow students would praise me for using my 'true,' authentic voice, and encouraged me to develop this 'voice,' to write more of these poems. From the onset this troubled me. Such comments seemed to mask racial biases about what my authentic voice would or should be. (p. 11)

Hooks explains that in her experience as a black student, the notion of having one, unilateral, authentic voice was never comfortable, since she (and she argues the same for other students and writers and people of color) has always understood her subjectivity as "multi-dimensional" (p. 12). She goes on to critique the popular or common feminist use of voice as "coming to voice" which places emphasis on voice as agency and silence as oppression. She explains that women of color have always had a voice--that the question

is not just one of moving marginalized out of silence, but on understanding and exploring what needs to be said and who is going to listen. I see this as a critique of the voice metaphor used in these conversations as synonymous with authenticity; hooks here critiques both the kind of subjectivity interpolated in this conversation and the ideology that attaches finding one's authentic voice with acts of resistance.

In the next chapter, I examine the use of the voice metaphor in theoretical texts that emphasize group subjectivity rather than individual subjectivity and that explicitly address external power structures that work to elevate and oppress certain group, rather than individual, identities. In this next chapter, I focus again on how power functions as an epideictic value across these conversations and the role that voice plays in conceptualizing and celebrating power operationalized through writing.

## Chapter 3
## The Collective Voice: Group Identification

*"I knew vaguely of the problem I dealt with in my paper, but because I wasn't doing much about it, nor did I see anyone else taking action, I thought it was an important discussion to enter in to."*

--First Year Writing student final reflection on why they chose their research paper topic

In this chapter, I examine the use of the voice metaphor in feminist and critical pedagogy, paying special attention to the ways in which this metaphor continues to establish and celebrate power as a central value in composition studies. Unlike the expressivist texts I analyzed in Chapter 2, the feminist and critical texts that I analyze in this chapter displace the values of nature and authenticity and position power and identity as collective, rather than as individual. I argue, in this chapter, that when the metaphor of voice is detached from nature and authenticity it can be used in the service of two very different types of pedagogies. On the one hand, this detachment gives rise to critical and feminist pedagogies that are overtly political and as such deploy the metaphor of voice as a means to disrupt current power structures. On the other hand, displacing nature and authenticity lays the groundwork for conservative pedagogies that conceptualize *voice* as a means for helping individuals fit into current power structures by adopting voices that are already valued within these structures.

To understand how the voice metaphor functions in texts that detach nature and authenticity from the value of power, in this chapter I closely analyze the use of this metaphor in representative texts from critical and feminist theory, namely Giroux's (1997) book *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope*, Gore's (1993) *The Struggle for Pedagogy*, and Rackow and Wackitz's (2004) text "Voice in Feminist Communication

Theory." Following the same approach as I took in Chapter 2, in this chapter I focus on the use of voice, across these texts, as both an epideictic metaphor and as metonymy for the writer. In the following sections, I first demonstrate voice's metonymic function in critical and feminist texts, arguing that while voice serves a metonymic role, critical and feminist theory conceptualize identity as shared or as belonging to a group rather than as individual. I then examine how the voice metaphor plays an epideictic role in these radical texts by celebrating the already established value of power conceptualized through participation. I identify and analyze the ways in which power is still celebrated but conceptualized differently from or similarly to the celebrated value of power in the expressivist texts explored in Chapter 2. I then illustrate how the metaphor of voice celebrates power while being detached from authenticity and nature in these texts; I argue that, in this way, critical and feminist pedagogies celebrate group, rather than individual, subjectivity. Finally, I analyze the pedagogical implications of Farrin's (2005) article "When Their Voice is the Problem," illustrating how completely detaching an autonomous, authentic individual from the metaphor of voice can fail to account for or engage with the important role of external power structures in determining which voices are valuable.

Like in Chapter Two, I argue in this chapter that voice serves the epideictic function in composition studies of strengthening adherences to shared disciplinary values. This function allows these critical and feminist authors to present new, radical, or different ways of understanding how power functions in relation to various systems, and how writing teachers might help students achieve power within and against these

systems. Because voice is already an accepted, familiar metaphor, and because power is presented in these critical and feminist texts as an already accepted, universal value, the voice metaphor allows these authors do work that might otherwise be very difficult, because they are doing this difficult, dangerous work using accepted, shared, safe language. While serving this epideictic function, voice simultaneously functions as metonymy in these critical and feminist texts. However, while in Chapter 2 I argued that voice served as metonymy for a natural, authentic individual, in the critical and feminist texts explored in this chapter, voice signals a concept closer to ethos than to an authentic self. In these texts, the metonymic function of voice conceptualizes identity as fluid and as shared. By extension, I argue that these texts likewise construct power differently than do expressivist authors, even though power and voice are celebrated across both conversations. In the following section, I more closely examine voice's metonymic role in these exemplary critical and feminist texts. As I did in Chapter 2, I then examine the ways in which, across these representative critical and feminist texts, voice's epideictic function works to both strengthen adherence to shared values and reconfigure these values in service of moving the audience towards the action of accepting a divergent or radical pedagogy.

**Collective Metonymy**

As I argued in Chapter 2, for Elbow (1976), "voice" serves not only as an important metaphor that celebrates values such as power and authenticity, it is also deployed as metonymy for an individual, autonomous, coherent author. While most of this chapter examines voice's function as an epideictic metaphor in critical and feminist texts, in this

section I examine voice's metonymic function in critical and feminist pedagogy. In the representative texts analyzed in this chapter, voice serves as metonymy for the individual author but also for the group that the author identifies with or belongs to; rather than attaching itself to a coherent individual, voice attaches itself to a context-dependent group or collective identity. Metonymy, as I defined in the previous two chapters, substitutes a cause for the effect, or uses a part to represent the whole (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Quinn, 1995). Rather than functioning as a part of a person representing an entire individual person, in critical and feminist texts, *voice* functions as a part of a collective of people (a choral voice rather than an individual speaking voice) that both represents a *group* of people and signals *whether that group has power* within a given system.

As one example of attaching voice to a group rather than to an individual, Giroux (1997) uses terms like "teacher voice" and "student voice" to identify how power functions in the classroom. Giroux deploys "teacher voice" as metonymy that does not signal any specific, individual teacher, but rather stands in for any teacher in any classroom. In his text, voice functions as metonymy for the group designated as teachers or the group designated as students. Further, voice in Giroux's text conceptualizes how these designated groups function and interact with each other in specific contexts. "Teacher voice" and "student voice" serve metonymic functions, standing in for the whole teach or student, but these designators position the contextual group identity as *most* important in Giroux's discussion of power and voice. In such critical and feminist texts, the voice metaphor still serves as metonymy, but voice is deployed as a substitute for group identity or affiliation rather than for a coherent, autonomous individual. As

such, a group, as well as an individual, can possess a voice, and can be silenced.

Compared with the texts I discussed in Chapter two, voice deployed as metonymy to represent a whole group, rather than an individual, is a key difference in how the voice metaphor functions in the critical and feminist texts explored in this chapter. Further, voice's distinct metonymic role impacts its epideictic role in these conversations. In critical and feminist texts, like in the expressivist texts discussed in Chapter 2, the metaphor of voice still celebrates the value of power conceptualized as being heard. However, because voice represents a group identification, rather than an individual identity, the values of authenticity and of nature are complicated and even displaced in critical and feminist texts that deploy the metaphor of voice. In this way, voice's metonymic function impacts voice's metaphorical function, and vice versa. The way that voice conceptualizes identity across distinct pedagogical conversations impacts the specific values celebrated and displaced within these conversations; in critical and feminist texts voice conceptualizes identity as shared and as contingent, and so while voice celebrates the shared value of power it detaches the values of nature and authenticity that expressivist texts frame as inherently tied to power.

In addition to challenging expressivist concepts of identity and the attachment of nature and authenticity to a valued, powerful author, the critical and feminist texts discussed in this chapter imagine the individual's relationship with voice differently than do the authors I discussed in Chapter 2. Rather than always emerging from within an individual, voice can be either *given* or *taken* by a source of power. Gore (1993) identifies critical pedagogy's depiction of voice as being given to a group of individuals

rather than coming from within an individual in her discussion of "the implication that the teacher is central in either giving voice to or silencing his or her students" in critical pedagogy (p. 102). Here, Gore uses the familiar metaphor of voice in a way that both celebrates the established, shared values and concepts attached to this metaphor and challenges certain assumptions about where voice comes from and the relationship between voice and agency. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) say that epideictic rhetoric functions by strengthening certain values so as to make them seem universal or timeless, all while displacing other, competing values. Critical and feminist texts celebrate the disciplinary value of power as universal while, at the same time, shifting adherence to new "truths" about how subjectivity and power function, as exemplified in Gore's examination of a teacher's ability to give voice to students.

Giroux (1997), Gore (1999), and Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) deploy voice metonymically in ways that reconceptualize identity as collective and contingent and, as such, challenge both the values of nature and authenticity and the notion that achieving power is an individual pursuit. Again, voice's metonymic function impacts its epideictic function, because the way in which power and identity are conceptualized through this metaphor necessarily impacts the values that can be attached to and celebrated alongside power. In the texts I discuss in further detail below, power is at once detached from individual agency (Gore; Giroux) and more strongly stitched to individual responsibility (Farrin, 2005), depending upon how detaching voice from an autonomous individual is understood. Farrin's article suggests that rather than being bound to one innate, authentic voice, an individual can move from one group to another, putting on appropriate voices in

order to identify with different groups. Critical and feminist texts likewise divorce voice from a conceptualization of an individual as authentic and coherent, although they advocate pedagogies that empower various voices--and by metonymic extension various group identities--rather than pedagogies that teach individual students how to pass from one group to another. In either case, voice does not represent an individual identity, but rather serves as metonymy for a designated group affiliation, and as such both identity and power are highly contextual.

The relationship between voice and power is central both in a discussion of voice's metonymic function and its epideictic function in critical and feminist theory. In expressivist texts, voice functions as metonymy for a whole person; in critical and feminist texts, voice functions as metonymy for a person's relationship to contingent, contextual power structures. For example, when Gore (1993) and Giroux (1997) use terms like "student voice" or a "teacher voice," these terms stand in for the whole person behind that text; however, the most important part about that person's identity is her relationship to the already existing structure of the classroom. The student voice or teacher voice represents the student or the teacher and their relationship to existing power structures and (in)ability to move around within these structures. While imagining power differently compared to expressivist texts, each author discussed in this chapter uses voice to highlight and strengthen the reader's adherence to power as a central, foundational value in composition studies. In the next section I more closely examine how *voice* shapes the various ways that power is conceptualized and challenged as one of the core goals in critical and feminist pedagogy and writing praxis.

**Power as Participation**

In this section, I argue that power is the key value that is both perpetuated and celebrated by the metaphor of voice in the expressivist texts discussed in Chapter 2 as well as by the critical and feminist texts discussed in this chapter. Moreover, the texts discussed in this chapter, like those discussed in Chapter 2, conceptualize power as participation. Despite this similarity, *participation* is conceptualized differently in these critical and feminist texts, which focus on external obstacles like group interactions and existing power structures. Like Elbow's (1973) text, critical and feminist texts serve a radical purpose: they use the already accepted, comfortable metaphor of voice to do the radical work of presenting uncomfortable, potentially unaccepted ways of teaching that emphasizes creating meaning through writing. Voice functions as an epideictic metaphor by celebrating the accepted, universal value of power; by attaching more radical concepts and values to power, voice allows these authors to present their pedagogies as likewise valuable and even as "universally" necessary.

Just as it is for Elbow (1973), the voice metaphor is important for feminist and critical theorists. And, like Elbow, these theorists use the metaphor of voice as the primary way to discuss and understand power, regardless of how individual identity and power are specifically imagined. Demonstrating the centrality of the metaphor, despite its various deployments or possible critiques, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) argue that "Voice, then, in its complexity and with attention to its political implications, should be a fundamental concern of feminist theorists seeking to produce change for women by enabling a social and political participation and efficacy for all" (p. 96). Although

Rakow and Wackwitz acknowledge that feminist texts do not celebrate a coherent, autonomous individual, voice is *still* an essential metaphor, and, what's more, it is a "fundamental concern" for feminist scholars. Largely, voice is an important metaphor because power, exercised and observable as "social and political participation and efficacy" is an important, celebrated value across feminist theory. Although feminist texts often critique and scrutinize specific imaginings of voice, identity, and power, these concepts remain at the crux of the conversation. In other words, even as voice comes under scrutiny as the only way to imagine power (Rakow and Wackwitz argue, for example, that silence can also often be an enactment of power), Rakow and Wackwitz claim that voice remains central to feminist work. They further insist that "even with these complexities, the significance of the concept of voice remains" (p. 98). Feminist theorists use this metaphor primarily to explore "identity, agency, and relations of power that enable us to understand and address conditions of oppression and domination" (p. 98). Demonstrating this seemingly unbreakable link between voice and power, Rackow and Wackwitz argue that because "identity, agency, and relations of power" are central concerns to feminist theory, the metaphor that "enable[s] us to understand and address conditions of oppression and domination" *must* be equally central to this work (p. 98).

In addition to arguing for the general importance of *voice* across feminist theory, Rackow and Wackwitz (2004) articulate an emphasis on "identity, agency, and relations of power" across feminist texts. As such, they argue that voice, which is the primary metaphor allowing for such investigation, plays a central role in any discussion of identity and power. Across the feminist and critical texts that I explore in this chapter,

power and its complex relationship to identity are presented as epideictic, as their importance to writing instruction is presented as a universal, eternal truth, each time authors deploy the metaphor of voice. Each author I discuss identifies power as a central value, and each imagines power as realized through participation. Specifically, these authors are concerned with discovering ways to increase student power through increasing student "voice" or student ability to participate in important conversations. In their texts, this goal of participation, attached to the value of power, is never contested. Critical pedagogues, feminist pedagogues, and even apolitical authors like Farrin (2005) already agree that they want more students to be able to realize their own power by entering into a conversation; they want their students to be "heard." Like for Elbow (1976), these texts celebrate the value of power through the voice metaphor.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, across conversations in composition studies, voice's ability to signal participation in a conversation links this metaphor to the value of power. For Elbow (1973), participation happens when a writer connects with a reader. This connection depends upon a writer's ability to look inward, to develop her own authentic, natural voice, so as to overcome her anxieties that prevent her from participating. While still conceptualized as participation, the authors explored in this chapter created different methods for achieving power through participation. Critical and feminist theorists imagine participation as only achievable through an outwardly focused interrogation of current power structures; Farrin (2005) imagines participation as enacted through a pedagogy of imitation and codeswitching, work that is likewise imagined as primarily external to the individual writer. Despite this distinction between external and

internal, or collaborative and individual, pedagogies, voice remains as the key metaphor for conceptualizing what this, often very dissimilar, participation *looks like.* In other words, even as they challenge and scrutinize what it means to have a voice, the texts explored in this and the previous chapter do not challenge the notion that to have a voice is to participate, and to participate is to enact power.

Exemplifying the unchallenged necessity of the voice metaphor across feminist scholarship, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) claim that "voice has been the most important and useful concept for feminist theory," placing voice even above the concept of 'difference' when accounting for the extent to which it has been written about and interrogated. They say that most academic fields "have used the concept of voice as a methodology to recover women's experiences, meanings, and resistance to their subordinate positions" (p. 94). In theories concerned with power, agency, and resistance, voice is an often deployed and important metaphor. The attachment of voice to power seems *almost* universal; I argue that it is indeed *treated* like a "universal" or "eternal truth," which marks the epideictic role that the voice metaphor plays in such texts. However, while voice is used to celebrate the already adhered-to value of power and agency, it also works to position power, and voice, as something that can only be achieved when placed within the context of the entire social and power structure. Power is understood as collective and voice is likewise attached to group identification, which can shift within and among varying contexts and power structures. So, as power and voice are attached to group identification, these things are also disassociated from individual, autonomous identity. The very notion of an autonomous individual subject is

displaced, and identity, voice, and power are understood as contextual and social, even as this familiar metaphor is deployed in ways that directly conflict with the type of identity the metaphor of voice constructs in texts such as Elbow's. Below I show how critical and feminist texts use this metaphor in order to celebrate 'universal' values and to shift the understanding of how these values are achieved.

**Power as group identification.** In critical and feminist texts, participation, and enacted power, are imagined as a group effort. This understanding of how power is realized conflicts with Elbow's (1973) emphasis on power realized through individual participation, or through an individual connecting with another individual. In other words, in Elbow's text the individual, autonomous writer enacts power through connecting with an audience, and she connects with an audience by cultivating her natural, authentic voice. Pushing against the notion that connecting with a reader is primarily an individual effort, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) discuss how one might "make a voice heard" (p. 106). This quote exemplifies what I see as a key difference in the texts explored in this chapter as compared with the texts explored in Chapter 2: voice, and by extension power, is not achieved (or perhaps even achievable) by an individual. Rather, these authors discuss strategies to "make a voice heard" that involve agents other than the writer or even any one reader. Voice can be given or taken away by a structure, an individual, or a group. Voice as a metaphor and as a concept is attached to a group identity, rather than to an individual, and power is understood through an examination of how groups interact with one another and with these pre-existing, external structures.

Power is already attached to the metaphor of voice in composition theory, but

critical texts such as Giroux's (1997) and feminist texts such as Rakow and Wackwitz's (2004) work to redefine power while strengthening adherence to this value. When Giroux discusses power, he says that the basis for developing a real radical pedagogy "lies at the outset in redefining the concept of power with respect to everyday experience and the construction of classroom pedagogy and student voice" (p. 121). Here, voice plays the same epideictic role that it does in Elbow's text. Giroux is advocating and describing a radical pedagogy, but the focus on "student voice" is not radical, it is familiar. This epideictic metaphor allows Giroux to do the radical work of "redefining the concept of power," which is already connected to and celebrated through the metaphor of voice. Voice is redefined implicitly just as power is redefined explicitly.

Like Giroux (1997), feminist pedagogy complicates the relationship between voice and power because the notion of subjectivity itself is scrutinized. While power is still celebrated through voice, and still conceptualized as "being heard," this concept of connected with a reader is closely tied to the way that identity and subjectivity are understood. For critical and feminist pedagogues, how subjectivity has been constructed and how it is understood is extremely important in our understanding and use of voice in connection with power. However, the link between voice and power is still quite strong, though even this link is interrogated. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) say that "Feminist scholars across a range of disciplines have been adding to our understanding of voice through work that interrogates relations of power at various levels--from language to talk to stories" (p. 98). Because subjectivity is understood as constructed through stories and talk and these "relations of power," it is also contextual. Giroux, Gore (1993), and

Rakow and Wackwitz often use qualifiers, such as "student voice" and "teacher voice," for example, to discuss how voice is representative of an entire group. These groups are constructed and are also dependent on relationships; there is no "student" without there also being a "teacher," and these voices construct and are constructed by each other. Power, then, also focuses on group identity. The metaphor of voice celebrates collective achievements rather than individual ones, again because subjectivity itself is seen as collective.

One important way that power and voice are redefined to construct an ideological rather than an individual subject lies in the way that power and voice are viewed as constructed rather than innate. I see this conceptualization of a constructed voice as importantly connected to the conceptualization of voice as belonging to a group, rather than to an autonomous individual. Giroux (1997), in the quote above, says that radical pedagogy must understand "everyday experience" in order to understand "the construction of classroom pedagogy and student voice." This quote is important because it describes, almost in passing, voice as constructed and voice as *student* voice. I see these qualifiers of *constructed* and *student* as importantly distinguishing between how voice and power are imagined in these texts and how voice and power are imagined in Elbow's (1973) text. While using the familiar metaphor of voice to describe some essential quality present in a text, a quality that is already seemingly inherently linked to power (to have a voice implies that you are participating, and are heard), Giroux and other critical and feminist theorists reshape this quality as something used to identify or signal a group, such as students, rather than an autonomous individual. Just as voice is

attached to a group through the modifier of "student," it is also understood as constructed through things like everyday experience. Experience constructs voice; in Elbow's text, voice must be parsed out from the everyday experience or group interactions that might change or impact a natural, authentic voice that exists inside of an individual.

Giroux (1997) goes on to define power (though not voice) by explaining that power "signifies a level of conflict and struggle that plays itself out around the exchange of discourse and the lived experiences that such discourse produces, mediates, and legitimates" (p. 121). Again, "lived experiences" or "everyday experience' construct voice. Power, and voice with it, are now also connected to conflict and struggle and discourse. Conflict and struggle might not necessarily signal something that happens among a group--one might have conflict and struggle alone. However, because this conflict and struggle "plays itself out around the exchange of discourse" voice is once again pushed away from the individual and toward the group.

For feminist and critical theorists, voice does not happen in isolation; coming to voice or finding voice is always inherently a group endeavor. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) say that "But a critical part of talk becoming voice is the means and ability for talk to be heard" (p. 101). They say that "Voice requires that one's own meanings and experiences are heard and taken into account" (p. 104). Voice is so inherently linked to power here that the words "power" or "empowerment" are implied in the phrase "voice requires that one's own meanings and experiences are heard and taken into account." Voice celebrates the value of power through an interaction: for a group or an individual to have a voice, which is to have power, another group or individual must be available to

*hear* that voice. An individual does not find her voice without the help of another individual or group--generally the individual or group that always has the power--who must be willing and able to hear the voice. There is a back and forth in this understanding of voice that attaches this metaphor to group interaction more strongly than in Elbow's text. For voice to be voice instead of just "talk" the voice must "be heard."

**Discourse and voice.** In both critical and feminist texts, such as those analyzed in this chapter, discourse serves as an important word that is attached both to power and to voice and that helps to shift the epideictic function of voice as a metaphor that celebrates constructed, group or structural power rather than autonomous individual power. Giroux (1997) says that "discourse is both a medium and a product of power. In this sense, discourse is intimately connected with those ideological and material forces out of which individuals and groups fashion a 'voice'" (p. 121). The important part of this quote, that which differs from Elbow, is the notion of "groups fashion[ing] a 'voice'" together as opposed to an individual developing his natural voice as an individual.

Giroux (1997) talks at length about the relationship between power and discourse. He uses the voice metaphor, but unlike Elbow, voice does not seem to be the key or core way to an individual realizing his or her power. For Elbow, the voice itself is the source of power; for Giroux, there is a relationship between discourse and power, but not each voice is powerful. He says that "If language is inseparable from lived experience and from how people create a distinctive voice, it is also connected to an intense struggle among different groups over what will count as meaningful and whose cultural capital

will prevail in legitimating particular ways of life" (p. 121). Giroux frames voice as part of the struggle for power, but it is not the way to unlock innate power. Further, a voice is "create[d]" by an individual. However, language "is inseparable from lived experience"; language (through which a voice is created) is not located inside the individual. In Giroux's text, voice is more closely linked to power through its connection "to an intense struggle among different groups."

This relationship between power and discourse is a key element of how the metaphor of voice functions in texts such as Giroux's (1997). He argues that radical pedagogy should not abandon the system or distance itself from the conservative institutions, but rather revise the power within these institutions through a focus on the relationship between power and discourse. This relationship between discourse and power is key for critical and feminist pedagogy, and voice is a metaphor that helps allows practitioners to examine this relationship. Giroux says that a benefit of a radical pedagogy that focuses on this relationship "is that it refuses to remain trapped in modes of analysis that examine student voice and pedagogical experience from the perspective of the reproductive thesis. That is, power and discourse are now investigated [...] as a polyphony of voices mediated within different layers of reality shaped through an interaction of dominant and subordinate forms of power" (p. 122). In this way, by exploring these "layers" and the "struggle" to create meaning, "radical educators can fashion not only a language of critique but also a language of possibility" (p. 122). Voice is, for Giroux and other critical pedagogues, a metaphor tied to discourse, and tied to an understanding of power and subjectivity as multiple and as constructed. Voice, and more

appropriately voices, are shaped by external power structures and mediated through discourse among groups. Voice is still connected to power, but power becomes much more complicated in these texts. The end goal is not just to write or even to connect with an author. Rather than one individual connecting with one author, power is understood as groups of individuals engaging in discourse with other groups of individuals, all while these groups and the structures in place that create them navigate complicated power relationships.

Discourse is a word that celebrates the social element of voice. Rather than looking inward to cultivate one's natural voice, discourse focuses the metaphor of voice outside the individual. Moreover, discourse focuses on the interplay between and among individuals. Exemplifying the importance of this discursive interplay in critical theory, Giroux (1997) says that "as a model of critique, the discourse of lived cultures should interrogate the ways in which people create stories, memories, and narratives that posit a sense of determination and agency" (p. 140). In this sentence, discourse focuses the metaphor of voice on people working collaboratively to create their world. Voice, in these texts, is linked to power when it impacts the material world, and material work impacts tend to come through group interaction rather than individual introspection.

**Voice and silencing.** Along with "discourse," the term "silencing" and "silenced" comes up in both feminist and critical texts and celebrate the value of power while linking power to a group. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) ask "How are women silenced? What happens when women speak up?" (p. 93). These questions interrogate literal concepts of voice and silence as well as metaphorical understandings of voice that,

according to Rakow and Wackwitz, pervade feminist theory. They identify "the role of voice in understanding women's place and women's means of resistance" (p. 93). Resistance, and its attachment to voice, is as evident for feminist scholarship as it is for Giroux (1997). Silencing is a term placed in direct opposition to voice; to have a voice is to enact resistance and agency because to have a voice is to resist whatever individual, group, or structure is working to silence that voice.

Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) talk about voice in relation to resistance against the dominant social and power structure, stating the significance of "a right to be heard" (p. 94). In fact, they distinguish between "voice" and "talk" in that voice carries with it the notion that the speaker is heard, and thus, the speaker is empowered. They say that "The need for voice for those who are silent or silenced has been presumed to be self-evident" (p. 94). The voice metaphor here does not signal an individual, autonomous subject; rather, this metaphor used to signal an individual or group of individuals' position within a societal structure. Rakow and Wackwitz bring up the problem with assuming that "the need for voice" is "self-evident" only to go on to argue that while we should trouble all of our assumptions, even the most universal ones, voice is and has been an important metaphor in that it allows us to examine how groups are identified within social structures. Voice is directly juxtaposed with the word silent, and to have a voice means to have power within a social structure and to be silent means that some individual or group has effectively suppressed that power.

Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) mention that "a corollary to the assumption that *voice is good* is the assumption that *silence is bad*" (p. 95); I argue that this displacement of

*silence* as something that may be valued is an earmark of the epideictic function that the voice metaphor serves in our discipline. To speak, to have a voice, is aligned with power, and to be silenced is to be disempowered. While feminist theorists question this line of reasoning and argue that silence can often be a powerful choice, such as Rakow and Wackwitz do when they claim that "Silence, too, can speak"(p. 96), the voice metaphor is still largely celebrated as a positive, universally understood goal even in these more critical texts.

Critical and feminist pedagogy's emphasis of the concept of "silent," and even more so of the term "silenced," reinforces voice as a metaphor for group identification and thus power, or the ability to have a voice, as associated with group or structural rather than individual value. Contrasted with expressivist understandings of power as something achieved by an individual through nurturing and retrieving one's natural voice, the voice metaphor in these texts is doing very different work from the work it does in Elbow's (1973) text. Both the texts discussed in Chapter 2 and those discussed in this chapter can be understood as radical texts that deploy voice as an epideictic metaphor in order to accomplish this radical work. The radical, or different, work that my investigation focuses on in critical and feminist texts happens when power, and voice, are understood as constructed and contextual and are attached to group identities rather than autonomous selves. As I established in Chapters 1 and 2, using the metaphor of voice allows all these authors to do this radical work, since voice serves the epideictic function of celebrating already established, universal values, such as empowering students; it would be very difficult for an author to start with the premise of taking away or silencing

voices, since voice understood as individual power and agency is already a shared value. Connecting terms such as *discourse* and *silencing* to the voice metaphor help to establish voice and power as contextual and as attached to group identification.

**Power and politics.** Along with understanding power as participation *as happening within already existing social structures*, another way in which the value of power is constructed differently is in its direct connection with politics. The connection between voice, power, and politics is a key distinction I see in the texts examined in these chapters as compared to the texts examined in the previous chapter. For example, Giroux (1997), and his pedagogy, is, unlike Elbow's (1973), overtly and centrally political. For him, power is always a political, rather than merely an individual, concern. Similarly, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) describe voice and power in terms of specific political and material implications that having, or not having, a voice has on the lives of particular groups of people. Voice is an important metaphor in Giroux's text, and it is also a metaphor that is overtly connected to power enacted in a political sphere. In critical and feminist texts, a writer's ability to connect with a reader is still considered important, but not all readers are equally able to either silence or give writers a public voice; in these texts, it is crucial that a writer understand power as an ability to reach readers who can not only hear their words and but who can also accordingly enact real, material, political change. In critical and feminist conecptualizations of power and voice, materiality (which is connected to the political) is an important factor in how power is imagined and enacted through writing and voice.

Along these same lines of focus on the material and political sphere, Giroux (1997)

discusses voice in his text *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope* saying that "student voices define themselves in terms of their distinct social formations and their broader collective hopes" (p. 160). Like Elbow (1973), Giroux is invested in developing a pedagogy in which students are able to realize power through participation, and like Elbow's, this pedagogy relies on celebrating the concept of student voice. Unlike Elbow, he imagines a radical pedagogy that works to restructure power dynamics within the institution rather than looking for ways to remove instruction from the institution (writing without teachers). It isn't enough to "merely celebrate one's voice" (p. 159). On the contrary, he insists that

> As part of the process of developing a pedagogy of difference, teachers need to deal with the plethora of voices, and the specificity and organization of differences that constitute any course, class, or curriculum so as to make problematic not only the stories that give meanings to the lives of their students, but also the ethical and political lineaments that inform their students' subjectivities and identities. (p. 158)

Struggle and conflict are, in these critical and feminist texts, understood as necessary, essential elements of discourse. According to Giroux, discourse, which is necessarily part of how power is negotiated and enacted, cannot happen without conflict and struggle among groups. These struggles and conflicts happen in the material, political world, and so for these authors, voice is a metaphor inherently tied to the political, just as it is tied to discourse and to group participation and identification.

Giroux (1997) claims that, currently, "both radical and conservative ideologies

generally fail to engage the politics of voice and representation--the forms of narrative and dialogue--around which students make sense of their lives and schools" (p. 120). For critical pedagogies such as Giroux's, the work we do in the classroom is inherently political, and the metaphor of voice is inherently political because things like power and identity are shaped by material, political realities. Just as the voice metaphor celebrates power as enacted in specific, social, contextual situations, the voice metaphor also celebrates power as inherently political. Because Giroux understands power as inherently tied to the political and material world, pedagogies that fail to engage the political realities of voice and of the classroom are not *really* radical pedagogies. Similarly, for Giroux, pedagogies that remove the metaphor of voice from the political, social institution (especially because these institutions so often work to silence rather than empower) are not *really* engaging in "the politics of voice." For the Giroux, as for the feminist theorists discussed in this chapter, the metaphor of voice celebrates the value of power, and power is seen not only as enacted by and within groups but as inherently political.

The use of the voice metaphor in feminist scholarship is likewise often overtly political. Speaking to the political nature of feminist theory, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) claim that "Feminist and multicultural scholars give more explicit attention to the political dimensions of the concept, generally using the term *voice* to refer to an authentic rendering of experience by those who have been silenced" (p. 104). They point out that "using the term *voice* to mean *the means and ability to speak and have one's speech heard and be taken into account in social and political life*" is really what the metaphor

means if theorists relate voice to power (p. 95). Here, the metaphor of voice is *inherently* linked to power and participation. For such feminist scholars, having a voice must signal both being "heard and [...] **taken into account in social and political life** [my emphasis]." Rakow and Wackwitz insist that merely including more voices in their collected works has not ended oppression for the groups that these voices represent. For feminist scholarship, as for Giroux (1997), voice is linked to power, which is linked to participation, which is linked to political and social engagement. Again, not only is the voice metaphor presented as inherently social in these texts, it is understood as overtly political. To have a voice means to have power only if that voice allows for meaningful participation in the political sphere.

Because voice, as a metaphor, is linked to political engagement and empowerment in these critical and feminist texts, the pedagogy that follows from these theories and which likewise invoke this metaphor must also be political. In other words, for these authors, the metaphor of voice should inform the classroom as a political space and "voice" pedagogies as political projects. Giroux (1997) critiques other pedagogies, saying that "instead of viewing schools as sites of contestation and conflict, radical educators often provide us with a simplified version of domination that seems to suggest that the only political alternative to the current role that schools play in the wider society is to abandon them altogether" (p. 120). Giroux here highlights an important aspect in critical and feminist texts: education is a political project. Again this goal of a radical pedagogy is similar to Elbow's in that both authors celebrate power using the metaphor of voice. However, the difference that I've highlighted in this chapter is seen here in that

Elbow sees empowerment, and voice, as an individual, even apolitical, venture, whereas Giroux sees power and voice as a group-oriented, political endeavor. Giroux says that educators must "provide the pedagogical conditions for students to give voice to how their past and present experiences place them within existing relations of domination and resistance" (p. 159). A pedagogy of voice, for Giroux, is a pedagogy that directly engages these political structures "of domination and resistance"; these structures are what give rise to the voices that students bring to the classroom. A pedagogy of voice is a pedagogy of politics.

While the metaphor of voice politicizes the classroom, critical and feminist theorists also deploy the metaphor of voice to call attention to how academia should concern itself with how power is realized outside the classroom. Unlike for Elbow (1973), merely being able to write, and even producing writing that successfully makes a connection with or gets through to a reader, is not enough for realizing power for Giroux (1997) and Gore (1993). Emphasizing the need to conceptualize voice and power not only as something attached to but as something that goes *beyond* merely having the opportunity to write, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) argue that "Speaking in and of itself does not guarantee political efficacy" (p. 95). The metaphor of voice is an important tool for feminist theorists because it goes beyond just the notion of "speaking" or "writing" or even being heard or read by another individual. Voice happens when an individual is empowered in such a way that they have some control over their own political and material circumstances. Rakow and Wackwitz further insist that "voice," as a signal for power, must really indicate widespread and serious readership; they argue that "The

circulation of voices among scholars and some outside constituents cannot be said to constitute 'voice.' Surely we have not solved the problem of domination and oppression by finding places in our books and journals for voices outside the academy" (p. 95).

Illustrating this shift from an expressivist notion that the ability to write alone constitutes an important step towards power, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) claim that, for feminist theory, "The end goal [is to] have a voice that is heard, acknowledged, and taken into account in setting and adjusting the course of our local and collective lives" (p. 95). This quote again exemplifies the continued importance of the term *voice* in feminist theory and that term's connection to a celebration of power; however, the means for actually achieving that power focus more intently on material, measurable, positive change. Again, Rakow and Wackwitz say that they are "using the term *voice* to mean *the means and ability to speak and have one's own speech heard and be taken into account in social and political life*" (p. 95). Recognizing how politics and outside structures shape student voice is important for pedagogies such as Giroux's and Gore's, but the pedagogical values celebrated by the metaphor of voice include recognizing what happens in the classroom as an extension of what happens outside the classroom and working to change the classroom so that what happens outside the classroom can also change.

Another term, along with *discourse* and *silence,* that these critical and feminist texts associate with the metaphor of voice and which celebrates the inherent ties between politics and power is *activism*. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) say that "Being clearer and more reflexive about what we hope to achieve through voice could lead to another phase

of activism in feminist theorizing" (p. 95). Like for Giroux (1997), not only is voice linked to power, but power is realized, at least to a certain extent, through critical interrogation, reflexivity, and activism. The goal that can be achieved "through voice" is a political one. Voice celebrates power, and power is understood as social, political, and enacted through discourse among group identities. In the next section, I contrast these overtly political pedagogies with a more conservative pedagogy, based in the practice of imitation, which also constructs power in terms of the ability to actively and materially participate in dominant, political, social spheres.

**Radical and Conservative Pedagogies**

Part of the political project that the voice metaphor invokes for critical and feminist theory involves understanding and dismantling the distinction between the voices that are empowered outside and within the university and understanding how the interplay of various institutions shape student and teacher voice. The texts discussed so far that are representative of most critical and feminist theory focuses the use of voice to celebrate a power that is enacted through meaningful participation. For these texts, participation hinges on deploying the voice metaphor to signal group identification, and this deployment detaches *voice* from an *individual* to celebrate, instead, an *ideological* subject. Giroux (1997) says that "affirming the voices that students bring to school and challenging the separation of school knowledge from the experience of everyday life" is an important element of the radical pedagogy that he proposes (p. 159). In order to celebrate the value of power, critical and feminist theory focuses on using the voice metaphor as a way to interrogate and challenge the ways in which certain groups are

empowered or disempowered in our current social and political structures in order to challenge these structures. In this section, I examine how this detachment of *voice* from a coherent, autonomous, individual writer lends itself to such critical and feminist pedagogies that I have discussed so far in this chapter. Additionally, I demonstrate the ways in which this same detachment gives rise to what I view as a more conservative pedagogy that focuses on allowing individuals to navigate dominant political and social structures rather than working towards dismantling these structures.

Detaching voice from an individual in order to attach it to a group, I argue, opens up the space to imagine power through participation without dismantling the current structures and without working towards valuing more, different *voices*. While authors such as Giroux (1997) and Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) see their goal as dismantling current value systems in order to value more, different voices, authors such as Farrin (2005) see the value of power as participation enacted by enabling individuals whose voices signal a devalued group identification to adopt a voice that signals a group identification that is valued within specific contexts.

Farrin (2005), in his text "When Their Voice is the Problem," uses this metaphor more tentatively, often substituting for *voice* the terms "language" or "dialect"; he even goes so far as to place the term "voice" inside quotation marks. For Farrin, language passes through the writer rather than emerging from within the writer. This understanding of language as constructed and contextual is similar to how critical and feminist theories understand language through the metaphor of voice. Like for Giroux (1997), Gore (1993), and Rakow and Wackwitz (2004), Farrin understands voice as

constructed and contextual because the idea of an autonomous subject is scrutinized. Farrin claims that understanding voice as natural, inherent, and coming from within the writing subject is more damaging than helpful. He argues that "voice" pedagogies such as Elbow's do a disservice to students whose voices--either their ideas or their ways of expressing these ideas--are not already empowered.

Farrin (2005) detaches voice from the natural, autonomous self, like Gore (1993) and Giroux (1997), and imagines it as inherently related to discourse and to power structures. However, unlike either Gore or Giroux, Farrin focuses on helping students imitate dominant "voices" so that they can gain power through entering into dominant discourses. Gore and Giroux, on the other hand, argue for restructuring, critiquing, and changing the dominant discourses so that other voices are recognized and able to participate. Gore and Giroux represent pedagogies that want to change the power structure; Farrin represents pedagogies that want to help students access the current power structure.

Like Giroux (1997), and Gore (1993), Farrin's (2005) text celebrates the notion of voice as power while distancing voice from the traditional, institutional practices of teaching university writing. Farrin claims that he came to his own voice not through formal education but through all the books he read, saying that "Those boxes of books were my teachers" (p. 139). However, unlike Elbow, his pedagogy focuses on what teachers should do in the classroom for their students. In this way, Farrin is similar to critical and feminist theorists. Farrin's pedagogy differs from critical and feminist theory in that he understands the link between voice and power as a tool to help students adapt

empowered "voices" rather than using the classroom as a site to contest power structures so that more, different "voices" might be heard.

Because voice is viewed as contextual and as ideological, critical and feminist theorists use the voice metaphor to examine how the social dynamics of power are played out. However, conceptualizing voice in this way, as ideological and contextual rather than *personal*, Farrin (2005) is able to make the case for a pedagogy that teaches students to imitate powerful voices as a means to achieve personal power through participation. Below I explore how the voice metaphor celebrates power while disassociating power and subjectivity from what is "natural" and "authentic." Detaching voice from these concepts of *nature* and *authenticity* allows for these two very different pedagogical strands that I contrasted in this section.

**Detaching Voice from Nature and Authenticity**

As I discussed in the previous sections, the metaphor of voice is deployed in critical and feminist texts to celebrate the value of power, which is achieved through participation. Voice, and power, are understood as shared or as taking place among and through groups rather than through an individual. In this sense, voice is used as a metaphor to interrogate structural rather than individual power and agency. As voice is detached from the individual and attached to group identification, the metaphor of voice is also detached from the value that I described in Chapter 2 as *nature*. Just as I discussed in previous sections, voice is seen in these critical and feminist texts as constructed, shared, and contextual. Once voice is used to celebrated a subjectivity that is understood as *ideological* rather than *natural*, an individual is free to achieve power by

"trying on" many different voices in different contexts. At the same time, once voice is understood as celebrating a subjectivity that is constructed the valuing of certain voices over other voices is more immediately revealed to be arbitrary and contrived, and the possibility of changing the structures that only value certain voices is suddenly possible.

In these critical and feminist texts, and even in Farrin's (2005) text, voice, rather than being attached to nature, seems almost representative of an *anti*nature, or a way to challenge the very idea of a "natural" order, particularly in relation to dominant social and power structures. On way in which nature, not only as a value attached to voice but as a value in and of itself, comes under scrutiny is in feminist theoretical challenges regarding the belief in a "natural" or "neutral" conceptualization of language. For example, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) claim that feminist theory:

> challenged what was considered truth in the field about language, interaction, and rhetoric. Assumptions about the neutrality of language, the functionalism of interaction, and the motivations behind Western principles of persuasion have all come under scrutiny. (p. 94)

They say that "the term *voice* is so widespread in work by feminists and scholars of color that its significance can be taken for granted and its complexity overlooked" (p. 94). I see this understanding of voice as something that is complex and significant, something worth investigating and defining, as against the understanding of voice as natural, or as something naturally, implicitly understood by the writer and the reader of a text. They say that "experience does not exist outside of and apart from the cultural meanings available to members of speech communities" (p. 95). Not only is the value of nature--

internal, individual, or human nature as belonging to the autonomous subject--challenged and displaced, but a new value is celebrated in its place. The metaphor of voice helps to displace the value of nature in order to value understanding subjectivity and power structures as constructed rather than natural.

**Celebrating multiple voices.** Critical and feminist theorists work to adhere the metaphor of voice to power while detaching voice from the idea of an autonomous subject. To do this, they deploy the metaphor of voice to celebrate power while, at the same time, detaching the metaphor from the values of *nature* and *authenticity*. Once the metaphor of voice is detached from valuing "authentic" and "natural" voices, the possibility opens up for valuing multiple voices and for valuing a subjectivity that is likewise contextual and multiple. In other words, this conceptualization of subjectivity would admit that a student likely has more than one "real" voice, since voice is constructed through experience and often used to signal group belonging and since each student likely identifies with multiple, distinct groups. Some voices might still be more or less "authentic," but authenticity, and particularly an authenticity that is wrapped up in the value of "natural," is troubled and displaced as a central value. Further, the "authenticity" of a voice would be difficult for a *reader* to judge; instead, "authenticity," if it even exists, would be up to the writer to determine. Leaving the notion of whether a voice is authenticity in the writer's, rather than the reader's, hands would, I argue, push against the kind of problematic essentialist notions of identity that Royster's colleague and hook's classmates participated in.

Although Rackow and Wackwitz (2004) begin their chapter describing a physical,

literal voice, saying of a speaker that "Her voice [was] breaking with emotion" (p. 93), they quickly detach bodily, physical act of "talk" from the metaphor of voice. Even when they describe this physical voice as "breaking with emotion," voice is also serving as metonymy for the whole person: the voice is breaking because the person feels vulnerable and broken. Voice is indicative of something deeper within the person, and it is linked to whether that person is empowered. Rakow and Wackwitz say that even though it was difficult, it was important for this woman to tell her story, since "stories are a means to produce voice" (p. 104). Voice is attached to the body, but rather than that attachment celebrating the value of *nature* as it does in Elbow's text, voice is still understood as constructed or produced through "stories" and experience. Further, the "voice" that is produced through the ability to tell one's story is distinct from "just talk." Voice signals and celebrates having power within a social and political structure.

One way that feminist texts use the metaphor of voice to celebrate a subjectivity that is shared, contextual, and constructed is to push against an understanding of voice that essentializes identity. For example, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) direcitly recognize and critique the tendency toward essentializing identities when they say that "To assume that experiences preexist human interpretation essentializes experience" (p. 97). Here, voice is detached from the value of nature that Elbow celebrates in his text. For Elbow (1973), nature is a value that is celebrated through displacing the values of external influence and through strengthening adherence to an autonomous, unified subject. But for Rakow and Wackwitz, there is no natural or innate experience that voice can draw out of an individual since experience does not "preexist human interpretation." These texts

celebrate voice and power, but are very wary of essentializing voice, identity, or experience in a way that assumes certain voices are more natural than other voices, or that there is one better, more natural, more truthful experience tied to any given identity.

Just as these texts work to distance voice from the value concept of "natural" as they conceptualize individual subjectivity, they also work to distance voice from an understanding of group identity as natural or as stagnant. In other words, the way in which nature is valued through the metaphor of voice in Elbow's text works to celebrate a subjectivity that is inherent and unchanging; feminist and critical theories use the metaphor of voice as a way to understand group identity as contextual and multiple. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) say that "A further problem occurs when a 'common experience' is evoked as a way to unify a group, overriding the diversity of its members" (p. 97). They further warn against the "Danger of simplistic presentations of voices that essentialize a feminine nature and common experience" (p. 105). Rakow and Wackwitz use the metaphor of voice while challenging the understanding of voice as celebrating a group identity that is natural or essential. They deploy the metaphor of voice not to strengthen adherence to a belief in an autonomous, natural subjectivity but rather to "challenging foundationalist thinking that assumes preexisting subjects and the pre-interpretive innocence of experience" (p. 105). For feminist theorists such as Rakow and Wackwitz, voice is an important metaphor because it allows them to critically investigate, without essentializing, group identity and how it is molded within the contexts of pre-existing structures. Rakow and Wackwitz say that "we ask questions about this speaking subject in need of voice, whose subjectivity cannot be taken for granted and whose

authenticity to speak as and for a group identity can be challenged" (p. 95).

Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) work to further trouble authenticity by taking on the example of subjects who speak in more than one language, who have more than one obvious "voice"; if a student speaks multiple languages, no one voice is necessarily more authentic or more inherent to the individual than another. Rakow and Wackwitz use this example of multilingual individuals in order to examine the problematic issue of essentializing identity or understanding authenticity of voice as inherently *singular*. Royster (1996) articulates her own experience with this same issue, which I argue is linked to understanding voice as attached to an autonomous, or what feminist and critical pedagogues would call essentialized, identity. Pushing against an understanding of identity as singular, Rakow and Wackwitz explain that individuals who are bilingual must recognize the "social and ideological consequences of the language [they] chose" (p. 99). They go on to say that "when people are forced to speak a language other than their own, or to choose one language over another with negative consequences for either choice, it reveals the problems of identity caused by how people's language and language use is judged" (p. 99). Rakow and Wackwitz construct language as inherently multiple and as inherently constructed and political, saying that language is often "a class identity marker" as much as it is something that is authentic or belonging to the individual (p. 99). Further, "Moving from the language of the home to the language of school does not occur easily for members of many groups, including members of the working class" (p. 99).

This example illustrates specific problems with understanding authenticity of voice

to mean that a writer can only claim *one* voice, and with understanding authenticity of voice as inherently, always powerful. For feminist and critical scholars such as Rakow and Wackwitz (2004), the concept of authenticity is not necessarily devalued, but the idea of authenticity tied to subjectivity is criticized and questioned. Largely, authenticity as a value is called into question because the ability to mark or judge authenticity relies on a certain conception of the subject as autonomous. Feminist and critical pedagogues largely undo this autonomous subject, and understand subjectivity in terms of group belonging and in terms of how subjectivity is constructed from the outside rather than cultivated from within. Rakow and Wackwitz say that "The position of being out of the center of discourse is the very means by which a subordinated identity is produced" (p. 96). Moreover, they argue that "claiming voice and speaking 'authentically' and 'as women' has its theoretical and political dangers, despite its attractive appeal" (p. 96). In feminist theory even more so than critical theory, qualifiers such as "student" "teacher" or "woman" are all used critically with the knowledge of risking essentializing such identities. For example, Rakow and Wackwitz say that there really is no such thing as a "woman's voice" that can represent all women subjects, and in fact "some women's voices are heard more than others and [...] their voices can silence other women" (p. 96).

In such feminist texts, voice is celebrated without the need to value voices that are read as authentic or natural, in part because reading voices this way is a near impossible task. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) say that:

> Not only do we find that there are disjunctures between women's experiences and the language and narratives in which they can be told, but also we find

> there can be disjunctures between what women make of their own experiences and what feminists make of these women's experiences. (p. 97)

Their use of the voice metaphor troubles the notion of "authenticity" as it is tied to individual experience and/or to how a reader might interpret that experience, in part because everything is constructed and interpreted. Because "essentializing experiences obscures the sociocultural, historical, and ideological process that determines them" it is necessary for critical and feminist texts to detach the metaphor of voice from a celebration of what is natural or authentic, since these two values can often lead to readers (and, importantly, teachers) essentializing writer identity (p. 97). Critical and feminist texts work to use the metaphor of voice as a way to interrogate these "sociocultural, historical, and ideological process[es]" that construct voice and power, and so they must disassociate their work with values that "obscure" these things.

**Voice and imitation.** Although group identity is not naturalized or essentialized in these texts, it is still important to conceptualizing identity. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) say that "Forcing a group to give up its language forces a new worldview onto the group and endangers the worldview that is replaced" (p. 99). Significantly, the words given presence here are "force," "group," and "worldview." These terms call attention not to what should be valued or celebrated, but to the danger inherent in certain actions associated with different understandings of "voice." It is dangerous to ignore the ways that external structures impact individual identity and, as such, individual voice. It is likewise dangerous to understand voice as completely fluid and inconsequential to the extent that forcing a group to adapt a new voice is viewed as entirely unproblematic. For

these feminist and critical authors, dentity is not "natural" or "essentialized" in that it does not spring forth from within an individual, and both individual and group identity shifts from one context to another. Because "Our identity derives from our experiences, and [...] our experiences occur in an already meaningful world of interpretations" (p. 105) there is an interplay among the individual, the group identification, and the structures in place that give meaning to these identities. However, voice is an element in identity and there is some relationship, even if not an essentialized one, between a "language" and a "worldview." For these authors, shifting among competing voices is possible, but never without consequences.

For Farrin (2005), on the other hand, because identity is not natural or individual, there is less of a need to preserve an individual or group voice in order to preserve identity or worldviews. As such, an individual, or group of individuals, can be taught to shift among various voices to suit the needs of a given context without any threat of replacing or endangering these groups' worldviews. Like Giroux (1997), Gore (1993), and Rakow and Wackwitz (2004), Farrin detaches the metaphor of voice, and its celebration of power, from the concepts and values of nature and authenticity. Moreover, power enacted through participation is the key value attached to the voice metaphor. However, rather than enabling participation by disrupting the current power structures that only value certain voices, Farrin advocates teaching students to imitate and adapt voices that are valued within the current political and social structures through a pedagogy based in imitation and codeswitching.

Farrin (2005) pushes back against the notion that any one voice is more or less

authentic to an individual, saying that "Much recent scholarship has deciphered how the most 'original' art is the product of earlier art, and the idea of an 'original voice' has been reconstructed" (p. 141-142). He positions voice as constructed rather than inherent when he claims that voice develops and changes and is the result of "a unique blend of influences" (p. 142). He says that expressivist pedagogies, like Elbow's, are "suspicious of imitation" and that these pedagogies even blame imitation for the bad writing that teachers see from their students. However, his pedagogy advocates not throwing out imitation in favor of cultivating "inner" "original" voice, but rather giving students the right things to imitate.

I argue that Farrin (2005) works even more than Gore (1993) and Giroux (1997) to detach voice from the values of *nature* and *authenticity*. These values are not devalued, but they are made more complicated, since the very concepts of nature and authenticity are called into question and complicated. He argues that students know intuitively that their "authentic" or "natural" voices are not valued in places of power, like the classroom. Rather than restructure the classroom to value these different voices, he advocates students learn to take on different voices in different contexts. Because voice is detached from authenticity, this codeswitching is possible without risking "inauthentic voice" in a text. Voice comes through an individual, not from within an individual. Students who benefit from expressivist pedagogy, according to Farrin, already have people in their "speech communities" that speak "correctly." If students don't have this, then he argues that "even if they were to find their voice, they could not use it to write a passing essay" (p. 142-143).

Challenging the notion that a *natural* voice is a *valued* or *powerful* voice, Farrin (2005) says he has students "who write naturally" and that, in their texts, he "can hear them speak" (p. 143). He goes on to argue that, for some students, the fact that their writing contains this "natural voice" is precisely the reason their texts are not valued. He claims that "the rhetoric of an 'individual voice' discourages them from finding and studying" appropriate sources that they can imitate (p. 144). Farrin detaches authenticity from a powerful voice when he claims that for certain students whose voices are already marked as less valuable, "an authentic voice, fails to meet the class's goal. Constructing the student as one with a transcendent, monolithic self leaves the teacher with no effective pedagogy" (p. 144-145). Elbow might agree with this, as his book aims to do away with the importance of teachers and with a specific pedagogy, imagining this work as empowering the writer by casting off the importance of external instruction. Elbow (1973) advocates for a pedagogical focus on *voice* for the same reasons that Farrin does not: it puts the bulk of the responsibility (or the agency) on the student. Elbow believes in a metaphor that celebrates an authentic self, and Farrin critiques a metaphor that celebrates an authentic self. Farrin suggests a pedagogy based on "a theoretical model that dismisses the old idea of the self" so that students no longer feel that the only way to achieve power in writing is by looking inward and using a "voice" that is not valued or appropriate in the context of the classroom.

Drawing from the same concept of a multiple, constructed, contextual identity as the critical and feminist texts analyzed in this chapter, Farrin (2005) says that "the author has multiple selves. He is a unique confluence of other voices, none his own" (p. 145).

However, while Giroux (1997), Gore (1993), and Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) might agree with this understanding of self as multiple and contextual, they also contend that there is a link between voice and worldviews, and that neglecting or devaluing certain voices devalues or even destroys those worldviews. In this quote, Farrin seems to argue that all voices equally do not belong to the author, while feminist and critical theory might push back and argue that the author might identify with and claim certain voices as his own.

According to Farrin (2005), "When one's writing fails its subject and purpose, it is not a failure of the writer or of a process that looks no further than the writer, that holds the writer morally accountable" (p. 145). Here, Farrin describes the language that the student uses, or the voice in which the student writes, as disassociated from an authentic self. Further dissociating language from some inherent quality present inside an individual writer, Farrin remarks that "The goal of a student writer is the absorption or channeling of language that transforms the self and thus the writer" so that the writer's voice can reflect her multiple selves that are appropriate in different contexts (p. 145). For Farrin, language is "acquired," not intuitive. Whatever language the student uses "naturally" is not *really* natural in the sense of being innate, because all language is acquired through imitation and appropriation.

Although the means of achieving power through participation is different, Farrin's (2005) end goal is, like critical and feminist theory, to get more voices heard. For Farrin, this means enabling more individuals to participate in the current power structure, rather than changing the structure to include and value more, different voices. In this way, the

detaching of voice from the self almost ends up with a pedagogy that, like Elbow's (1973), focuses on the individual rather than the structure. Farrin argues that "These integrated sources had been absorbed and had changed them, making them like no one else, and the prose that came through them, channeled through a complex web of appropriated voices, those anterior sources, would be their own" (p. 150). While Elbow focuses on the individual by constructing a pedagogy that cultivates and nurtures natural voice, Farrin uses poststructuralist theory to argue that there *IS NO* natural voice, and so individuals can adopt and integrate voices of power into their identities so that these "appropriated voices" can become "their own."

**Conclusions**

The texts discussed in this chapter deploy the metaphor of voice in an epideictic manner to celebrate the value of power through participation. While this celebration of power is similarly noted across the texts I analyzed in Chapter 2, the texts in this chapter reconceptualize voice, power, and identity as structural, group, and inherently political concepts. As power is constructed as a shared inherently shared or as importantly attached to a group rather than an individual, critical and feminist texts also must address power in the context of the structures that create and restrain it. In doing so, power, and the metaphor of voice, becomes an overtly political, rather than personal, metaphor. I argue that these texts deploy voice as an epideictic metaphor in order to make radical or controversial arguments appeal to their readers' already established sets of values, just as Elbow (1973) and others do in the texts I explored in Chapter 2. In this chapter, the value of power as participation trumps any values that might be displaced, like *nature* or

*authenticity*. Actively displacing the values of nature and authenticity, the texts I analyzed in this chapter focus on and celebrate the value of power through this metaphor of voice.

Although texts such as Giroux's (1997), Gore's (1993), Rakow and Wackwitz's (2004), and Farrin's (2005) differ in significant ways, they each deploy the metaphor of voice to celebrate the value of power, conceptualized through participation. Further, for each of these authors, *voice* is understood as contextual and as ideological. These authors recognize that certain voices are already more valued within dominant social and political structures, while certain other voices are devalued or completely silenced. Because these authors acknowledge and emphasize the importance of these external, material structures, the voice metaphor signals a subject who is inherently *ideological* rather than *individual*. These structures shape subjectivity, and as such voice is understood as a metaphor that signals contextual, group identification. Voices are "marked" not on an individual basis but according group belonging, and subjects can, to some extent, move among various distinct groups.

Just as voice is inextricably linked to and influenced by these structures, these texts conceptualize voice as both collective and active. For critical and feminist texts, voice is collective in that the metaphor of voice places emphasis on discourse and on shared subjectivity. These texts are concerned with student voice and teacher voice, and they look at how power functions between and within group identities. At the same time, feminist scholars warn against essentialist notions of identity, and use voice as a way to push against overly simplistic or essentialist identity markers that assume each individual

marked by a given group identity has *the same voice* or, likewise, *the same lived experiences*.

Farrin's (2005) text, too, understands voice as collective, even though his pedagogy focuses on individual empowerment to a certain extent. Voice is collective for Farrin in that any given individual is really a collection of imitated and appropriated voices. An individual constructs his voice through the voices he interacts with. Farrin is concerned with group identity and voice as a marker of group belonging, but argues that individuals can shift, through code-switching and imitation-turned-incorporation, from one group to another group. Although this pedagogy focuses on getting more individuals to fit into the current structure, it still understands voice, power, and identity as collective and as contextual. For Farrin, as for critical and feminist scholars, voice celebrates the value of power as it is understood through discourse and shared identity.

Farrin (2005) draws from poststructuralist theories about voice and identity in order to create what I have argued is a more conservative than it is radical pedagogy, because it fails to challenge the existing, dominant power structures of the voices "of the classroom" and the voices "of the playground" (p. 143). While Farrin argues that each voice is equally correct within its "appropriate" context, he does not interrogate how or why these contexts are valued. In the next chapter, I directly examine poststructuralists texts like those that Farrin cites, particularly Barthes's (1967) "Death of the Author," to again investigate how the metaphor of voice celebrates the value of power through participation while strengthening adherence to a conceptualization of subjectivity that is contextual and multiple. Through my own investigation, I focus on the specific ways in which

poststructuralist theory informs composition's notions of power, identity, and writing.

These various, often directly dissonant, notions of power, identity, and writing already inform how writing students and instructors view their own relationships to the texts they compose. In a final reflection on their experience writing a research paper, a student enrolled in one of my first-year writing courses remarked, "I also learned that writing a paper should not be a one player game. The thing that allowed me to get through writing my research paper was the assistance of other people." This quote above and the student quote at the beginning of this chapter both demonstrate, I argue, an understanding of writing and power as collective rather than as individual. This first quote emphasizes the need to assess a conversation that is already happening and understand one's appropriate opportunity to enter into that conversation. The student, in that quote, comes to her own voice by understanding that voice in relation to others, as part of a larger, ongoing conversation. The student's focus, when choosing a research topic, was directed outward, toward "taking action." The student expresses a responsibility toward the collective rather than a responsibility toward herself. The second student reflection excerpt, quoted directly above, describes a student's experience learning "that writing a paper should not be a one player game" and emphasizes the importance of "the assistance of other people" when trying to do something through writing. I see this shift in how power is conceptualized as the key, most significant difference between the texts discussed in Chapter 3 and those discussed in Chapter 2. For Elbow (1973), writing is not a completely individualized pursuit; however, his pedagogy emphasizes voice as inherently tied to an individual. Across the texts explored in this

chapter, voice marks group belonging rather than individual identity, and power is only achievable through group identification and group efforts. Rather than being intimidated by the other voices, as the student quote in Chapter 2 described, these student quotes point to strength found in collaboration with other voices. Power is still valued, and power is dependent upon collective effort and collaboration.

The metaphor of voice, in the texts explored in Chapter 2, celebrates and focuses on the writer looking inward. I argue that the texts I analyzed throughout Chapter 3 celebrate and focus on the writer looking outward in order to exercise external power. In order to do this epideictic work, the metaphor of voice is attached to different, perhaps incompatible, understandings of identity, of power, and of the relationship between text and self. In the next chapter, these understandings are further complicated and reconceptualized, leaving composition scholars with an almost unrecognizable notion of "voice" when compared with Elbow's (1973) expressivist use of this metaphor; at the same time, I note that power is still largely celebrated by and conceptualized through the metaphor of voice, even as poststructuralist texts dramatically reconceptualize material constraints and implications to attaining power.

## Chapter 4: The Poststructuralist Voice: Challenging Values

*"I think the claims Derrida and Barthes made aren't definitions of writing, but more like different aspects of it that we should consider when reading or writing."*

--First Year Writing Student Reflection

This chapter explores how three key, touchstone poststructuralist texts by Barthes (1967), Derrida (1988), and Cixous (1976) complicate and call into question the values and concepts of power and identity that are invoked by the epideictic metaphor of voice and which I identified and discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Specifically, this chapter argues that these poststructuralist texts deploy epideictic tactics that both celebrate and challenge the core values of identity and power, which I argue are likewise celebrated and conceptualized across expressivist and critical texts. Moreover, the poststructuralist texts I analyze in this chapter attach another value, which I name *multiplicity*, to the already valued concepts of power and identity; celebrating multiplicity through the voice metaphor and attaching multiplicity to power dramatically repositions these epideictic values. Taken together with expressivist and critical texts that focus on identity and power in connection to writing, these poststructuralist texts bring to light dissonant ideologies and values attached to various concepts of *voice*. I argue that the way identity and power is understood in these texts, in some ways, directly clashes with the way identity and power are understood in chapters 2 and 3, even as power is still celebrated as a core value attached to writing and even as identity is understood as importantly attached to a text.

Unlike the expressivist and critical texts that I analyzed in Chapters 2 and 3, these poststructuralist texts are not explicitly written for writing instruction or writing

instructors. However, poststructuralist theory is important for composition theory, as it has informed compositionists' conception both of the writing subject and the concept of power. As such, I and others (e.g. Farrin, 2005; Bowden, 1999; Elbow, 1973; Howard, 1995; Yancey, 1994) argue that these texts inform compositionists' use of important disciplinary metaphors, including as the metaphor of voice. Further, how compositionists conceptualize the writing subject, and how they understand this subject's relationship to power, identity, and multiplicity, impacts how composition scholars use metaphors in ways that interpolate their writing students. This interpolation, in turn, impacts the dynamic of a writing class and can shape its limitations and possibilities. In order to examine how such important concepts and compositions are challenged and conceptualized in poststructuralist theory, I examine "Death of the Author" by Barthes (1967), "Signature, Event, Context" by Derrida (1988), and "The Laugh of the Medusa" by Cixous (1976). In these texts, I examine epideictic tactics and celebrated, shared values that conceptualize the writing subject and, thus, impact the epideictic metaphor of voice and the concepts that this metaphor signals.

I chose to focus my analysis on these foundational texts by Barthes (1967), Derrida (1988), and Cixous (1976) in this chapter because each text deals directly with reading and writing. Further, while each text is part of the poststructuralist cannon, each author develops from distinct philosophical and practical schools of thought.[1] I also find these texts to be among the more approachable poststructuralist texts that discuss and challenge

[1] Barthes writes out of a popular and semiotics tradition, Derrida constructs his texts using his foundation in the field of cultural anthropology, and Cixous's work emerges out of the Lacanian tradition of psychoanalysis.

the writing subject, and I have often used them to discuss writing with students in my own composition courses. Like the texts I examined in Chapters 2 and 3, these are not primarily epideictic texts; in fact, these texts take radical positions on overturning universal truths and values in order to lead their audiences to novel conclusions about what writing *is*. However, like the texts I discussed in previous chapters, they use epideictic language in order to present these radical values as attached to shared, universal truths regarding power, identity, and writing. Finally, these texts are important to a discussion of the metaphor of voice because they challenge what has been conventionally understood, even across various academic fields, regarding how communication works between a reader and a writer. The metaphor of voice, even in its inconsistent usage and referents, has consistently signified the connection between reader and writer through a text. As the understanding of this connection is challenged, so too is the understanding of what this metaphor represents, and its affordances and limitations in shaping compositionists understandings of written communication.

In this chapter, I first discuss the deployment of language such as the voice metaphor across these poststructuralist texts using the same theoretical framework of epideictic rhetoric that I developed and deployed in Chapters 2 and 3. As such, I explore how metaphors allow critical theorists to celebrate, as well as dismantle and challenge, *existing truths*, presenting them instead as *prevailing myths*. At the same time that it reconceptualizes and establishes shared values, as I demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 3, any epideictic metaphor carries epideictic "baggage." In this chapter I analyze how, as epideictic metaphors such as voice strengthen adherence to shared values in these

poststructuralist texts, they also displace competing values, presenting dissonant truths as mutually exclusive. Secondly, after analyzing the more general epideictic use of the voice metaphor, I explore how these texts specifically celebrate the commonly shared values of power and agency, even as these values are conceptualized differently than in the texts discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Specifically, I argue that while power and agency are still presented as key, celebrated, shared values across these representative poststructuralist texts, agency shifts from writer to reader and is conceptualized as shared meaning-making through a text. I argue that these texts work to value power and agency while, at the same time, they disassociate authorial control from these values. Third, I look at how identity and subjectivity are conceptualized in these texts, and argue that as identity is differently understood, then so too must power and agency be critically deconstructed and differently understood. Finally, I look at the way poststructuralist texts introduce the value of multiplicity itself, and I analyze this new value's potential impact on conceptualizing and valuing power and identity in writing.

**Critical Theory and Composition**

The three texts explored in this chapter, while certainly not exhaustive of the concepts of identity, power, and multiplicity, are representative of these concepts in poststructuralist theory. Each is cited directly (e.g. Bowden, 1999; Farrin, 2005; Rollins, 2006; Worsham, 1991; Howard, 1995) and indirectly (e.g. Lu & Horner, 2013; Greenfield & Rowan, 2011) in writing studies and writing instruction theory that discusses shifting or conflicting concepts of writerly identity. Derrida (1988), Barthes (1967), and Cixous (1976) each deal with values that the metaphor of voice invokes and

celebrates: power, individual identity, authenticity. Moreover, while each text celebrates these key values, each does so differently. In this chapter, I note important overlap in their treatment of power, identity, and multiplicity, but also significant distinctions in their overall focus and goals. Because of their importance in shifting understandings of communication and in redefining these shared values, these texts are valuable in a discussion of how the voice metaphor frames these in values in the field of composition studies. As a discipline that, according to the importance of this shared metaphor, is rooted in understanding the relationship between writing, power, and identity, Derrida, Cixous, and Barthes have significant implications for writing studies.

Critics of the voice metaphor, such as Bowden (1999), cite Derrida (1988) directly as a reason to abandon the metaphor of voice. She argues that Derrida has severed the tie between the author and his text by making language itself the one who "speaks." She further claims that as Derrida works to dismiss the binary between speech and writing, the metaphor of voice reinforces this binary, thus privileging speech. Finally, she argues that poststructuralist subjectivity conceptualized as constructed and fragmented is incompatible with the coherent, autonomous self that is celebrated by the voice metaphor in expressivist texts such as Elbow's (1973). For all these reasons, poststructuralist theory, and particularly works by Derrida, are often cited as reasons to replace the metaphor of voice with a visual metaphor that focuses on textual discourse rather than physical or individual speech. Similarly, Farrin (2005) cites Barthes (1967) as a reason to dismiss what he understands as problematic pedagogies that rely on the voice metaphor. He argues that since a self is understood as adaptive and contextual in texts such as

"Death of the Author," pedagogies that ask students to cultivate a coherent, inherent, or personal voice ignore the ways in which a writing subject can adapt or take on multiple voices in order to fit a given communicative context. Like Bowden, Farrin understands poststructuralist theory of self as one that removes the concept of an innate, authorial identity as fundamental to a successful text; as such, these critics claim that the metaphor of voice, which celebrates an innate coherent identity as the source of a text's power, is incompatible with poststructuralist theory.

Champions of the metaphor of voice are not unaware of critiques based in poststructuralist theory. Elbow (1994b), for example, cites Derrida in his work. He claims, in "What Do We Mean When We Talk About Voice in Texts?" that "Derrida calls voice a major problem in our understanding of discourse" (p. 1) and that he "tries to remove connotations of voice from writing" (p. 6). Rather than, like Bowden (1999) or Farrin (2005), using this critique as a reason to remove the metaphor of voice from composition's discussion of writing, Elbow places Derrida alongside a culture that tries to remove orality or "audible voice in writing." Elbow argues that despite this cultural push to separate writing from orality, voice remains a pervasive, useful metaphor and cannot be removed from our discussion of writing (although his treatment of Derrida suggests an understanding of poststructuralist philosophy as working to remove it). Elbow does not argue that poststructuralist understandings of voice wish to remove the metaphor from discussions of writing; in fact, Elbow even uses poststructuralist theory to advocate for using the metaphor as an uncontroversial way to talk about certain elements of written text. Elsewhere, Elbow (2012) argues that the metaphor of voice need not be

understood in terms of a coherent, autonomous self in order to be a useful metaphor and that, indeed, distinct understandings of writerly subjectivity do not impede the use of the metaphor of voice in discussions about writing and reading.

Whether poststructuralist theory is "pro" or "anti" the use of the metaphor of voice, writers such as Derrida (1988), Barthes (1967), and Cixous (1976) influence how writing theorists and instructors understand the values and qualities that this metaphor attaches to writing. Moreover, works by Derrida, Barthes, and Cixous have important implications for how composition instructors teach students to understand the relationship between themselves and their work. In addition to making overt claims about voice in text, poststructuralist theory indirectly impacts how those interested in writing theory and practice understand the metaphor of voice because this theory challenges the values of authorial identity, power, and agency in meaning-making which, as I discussed in chapters 2 and 3, are core values celebrated by the epideictic metaphor of voice. Poststructuralist texts deconstruct and reconceptualize understandings of identity and agency. If compositionists subscribe to poststructuralists notions of identity and agency, then they must likewise interrogate certain assumptions regarding how the metaphor of voice structures the connection between an author and her text.

In this chapter, I examine how Derrida (1988), Cixous (1976), and Barthes (1967) treat the enduring values of power and identity, and identify a "new" associated value of multiplicity. I argue that the values of power and identity are enduring in part because they are similarly valued by the authors discussed in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation and in part because they are presented by Derrida, Cixous, and Barthes as eternal,

universal values. In this sense, I argue that the values play an epideictic role in these poststructuralist texts. The celebration of these values allows Derrida, Cixous, and Barthes to establish communion with their audience. Just as for the texts discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the epideictic celebration of shared values enables these poststructuralist authors to create a shared foundation with their audience while working to disrupt this foundation and overturn myths about writerly control and meaning making through texts.

**The Epideictic Metaphor in Poststructuralist Argument**

The authors I examine in this chapter, like those examined in previous chapters, focus their discussions of writing on concepts of identity and power, as well as the connections between these concepts and the act of meaning-making through writing. Just as in the texts I analyzed in chapters 2 and 3, in these texts, voice functions primarily as an epideictic metaphor, invoking shared values celebrated as universal, eternal truths. This epideictic function allows authors to do important, groundbreaking work. As such, this metaphor played and continues to play a key role in redefining what composition's goal *should be.* For example, as I discussed in Chapter 2, during this 'golden age' of composition theory, Elbow and others used the voice metaphor in order to challenge certain current-traditional myths about writing instruction and to open up possibilities for composition as a site for negotiation, for student-centered practices, for empowerment, and realization of agency through writing. The poststructuralist authors discussed in this chapter similarly use epideictic means for challenging myths regarding power, identity, and meaning-making. While not always deploying the metaphor of voice as their

primary epideictic tactic, authors such as Derrida (1988), Cixous (1976), and Barthes (1967) celebrate shared values invoked by this metaphor. The celebration of shared values, particularly the focus on identity and power, allow these authors to overturn myths and construct competing "eternal truths" for their audiences.

I argue here, as previously, that the metaphor of voice serves a function that is *primarily* epideictic. I posit, throughout this dissertation, that if voice did not play this epideictic role, then it would be easier to hold multiple definitions attached to the same word at once. However, because *shared values* are at stake, the metaphor becomes much more contentious. In this section, I explore voice as serving a primarily epideictic function, even when the values celebrated are not already shared, eternal truths, and I discuss the importance of the role of epideictic language in radical theory. I further argue that, in these texts specifically, the epideictic work is stitched to the work of repositioning truths as myths to overturn old myths and present new possibilities for competing truths regarding the natures of identity and power. Barthes (1967) says directly in his text that "in order to restore writing to its future, we must reverse the myth: the birth of the reader must be requited by the death of the Author" (p. 55). Dismantling old truths or challenging myths is, in and of itself, a shared value of poststructuralist texts. Each text deploys some epideictic tools and tactics to celebrate the main, shared value of dismantling old myths and building up new, radical narratives.

Part of the epideictic work, which I note in these texts, of reconceptualizing the shared value of power is to disrupt origin stories and provide multiple new, competing stories. In other words, in these poststructuralist texts, the presumably shared origin is

challenged and replaced with the idea that there are many origins. Barthes, for example, dismantles the value of a singular interpretation of a text with the value of multiple interpretations. Derrida (1988) dismantles the value of singularity in communication and replaces it with the value of difference. As yet another example of this focus on multiplicity, Cixous (1976) displaces what she considers the masculine value of logic, which is singular, with what she names the feminine value of chaos, which is multiple and never-ending. However, because of the epideictic function of metaphor, even the presented value of multiplicity displaces other, competing values. In other words, voice still works in a way that makes this value appear mutually exclusive; if chaos is valued, order cannot also be valued. If difference is valued, or if multiple interpretations are valued, then singularity or authorial intention appears as devalued. Even Barthes says that he needs to kill the author in order to give birth to the reader: birth comes only at the cost of death. In these texts, to overturn old "truths," each author presents new, competing "truths."

As I mentioned above, these poststructuralist texts work to overturn seemingly eternal or universal "truths" by identifying origin stories and by repositioning eternal truths as constructed, contextual, culturally specific "myths." For example, Barthes (1967), Cixous (1976), and Derrida (1988) each invoke and cite celebrated French authors in order to gain audience adherence to radical values by celebrating already shared values. Barthes says that Mallarmé "continued to cast the Author into doubt and derision, emphasized the linguistic and 'accidental' nature of his activity" (p. 50), pointing out how the author very commonly has no control over the meaning made in his

work. Here, the shared values of power and control are celebrated, but control is detached from the author. Further, Barthes works to position the author as a specific cultural "myth" that is not eternal but has a specific origin story, is culturally specific, and which can be called into question. Barthes brings up an already celebrated author, someone his audience would know and value, which I see as epideictic/playing into the epideictic strategy of these texts. The theme of "myth" and "origin stories" gets deployed as eternal truths are challenged and replaced with competed, celebrated values.

One important eternal truth (or myth) that is both celebrated and challenged by these authors is the understanding that the primary function of a text and its fundamental source of power comes through the connection between reader and writer. Voice, across texts, celebrates the value of "being heard," which is how writing theory discussed in this dissertation has come to conceptualize power, whether it is internal or external, individual or shared, theoretical or material. As I discuss in sections below, Derrida (1988), Barthes (1967), and Cixous (1976) each conceptualize this connection between readers and writers. The connection between readers and writers, or the power of "being heard," serves an epideictic function for readers by tapping into shared, eternal truths. Specifically, even in texts that challenge the very nature of written communication, there is an assumed, celebrated value that texts are powerful when they are successful in connected a writer with a reader, or that having a voice is intrinsically powerful when that voice is "heard." Although these authors do so differently than authors discussed in previous chapters, they celebrate this value of "being heard" by using it as a premise in their arguments. For example, Cixous emphasizes the importance not only of writing but

of no longer doing so "in secret." Barthes emphasizes the interplay between reader and writer that happens through a text, and Derrida goes so far as to define a language as something that must be understood by at least two people. According to these authors and their emphasis on "being heard," a text that is never read is not *really* a text, in that it is not fulfilling the most basic function associated with writing: being read, and heard. Just like the texts I analyzed in chapters 2 and 3, the poststructuralist texts analyzed in this chapter celebrate writing as inherently social, imagining writing's power lying, at least in part, in its ability to serve as a bridge between reader and writer.

While the value of "being heard" is still celebrated in these texts by emphasizing a connection between writing and power, these texts also dramatically challenge how power attached to authorship is conceptualized. As I show in the following sections, these texts celebrate the shared value of power while challenging the idea of authorial power and, in some ways, disassociating this value of power with the concept of control. Barthes (1967) takes control away from the critic in order to give more control to the reader, Derrida (1988) challenges the notion that a writer ever has control over his text, and Cixous (1976) discusses the possibility of disrupting the control that masculine writing has had over feminine subjects. Even as they challenge traditional or current understandings regarding control, each author still celebrates power as a shared, eternal value. This epideictic celebration lays a shared foundation with the audience so that the authors are more easily able to challenge and overturn enduring myths regarding authorial power. Of course, these texts were not (and are not) universally accepted or well received, but the epideictic tactics still function for the audience by creating a

connection through this celebration of shared truths. The texts work to reconceptualize power's relationship to writing, while still recognizing and strengthening adherence to the shared, established value of power.

One way in which the value of power is reconceptualized in these texts hinges, in part, on reconceptualizing subjectivity. The metaphor of voice is often connected to an idea of an autonomous, coherent subject behind a text. However, these texts disassociate voice from a coherent, autonomous individual, and understand power as a dialectic relationship among reader, writer, and text. In many ways, the concepts of identity and power presented in this chapter seem incompatible with both Elbow's (1973) notion of the relationship between text and writer and with critical and feminist understandings of collaboratively enacted identity and power.

One conceptualization, or accepted "myth," of authorial power that these poststructuralist texts work to challenge is the understanding that a text *belongs to* an author, that it contains the author's voice, and that it is always already attached to the author's personal identity. The way that identity is conceptualized in terms of authorial voice as authorial control is related to the notion that texts possess a unity, and that this unity likes "in its origin" (Barthes, 1967, p. 54). However, rather than replacing the metaphor of voice with another metaphor, or directly challenging that metaphor and all the values and truths it might represent, these texts work to use the metaphor of voice differently. And, rather than completely dismissing the idea that there *are* origin stories, these authors present different origin stories. For example, Cixous (1976) presents her own invented origin story when she describes the "first music from the first voice of love

which is alive in every woman. Why this privileged relationship with the voice? Because no woman stockpiles as many defenses for countering the drives as does a man" (p. 884). Origins, presented as universal, are important for Cixous even as the value of multiplicity and chaos are celebrated. The metaphor of voice is aligned with chaos rather than with order, and like in the texts discussed in Chapter 3 celebrates shared or group identity, even though that identity is expressed and experienced by an individual.

While celebrating the foundational values of power and identity, Derrida (1988) works to undo the myth that the main reason people write is "because what they have to communicate is their 'thought,' their 'ideas,' their representations" (p. 4). Here, Derrida disassociates one of the most universally accepted "truths" about written communication: that writing is a manifestation of an author's inner thoughts or ideas. In this sense, Derrida challenges the very nature of written communication that his audience would have held. Similarly challenging the dominant conceptualizations of how and why people write, Cixous (1976) defines feminine writing as attached to the body in a way that, she argues, centuries of philosophy have worked to *detach* it from the body. She says that when a woman writes "all of her passes into her voice, and it's with her body that she vitally supports the 'logic' of her speech" (p. 884). While making different claims about the nature of writing and communication, Cixous and Derrida both challenge commonly held "myths" about writing, identity, and communication. Further, they draw on shared values in order to do so. In the following sections, I examine how these authors treat concepts of subjectivity, of power, and finally how the present a 'new' value of multiplicity. I argue that even as they work to undo such fundamental concepts

as how the subject relates to a text and how power is constructed and enacted through writing, they still celebrate the basic, epideictic concepts of power and subjectivity. In part, the epideictic work that maintains established (though differently conceptualized) values allows them to attach a new and perhaps more dangerous or radical value of multiplicity to voice.

Derrida (1988), Barthes (1967), and Cixous (1976) each work to overturn enduring myths regarding power, identity, and writing. Epideictic language and laying a foundation of accepted, shared values helps them to do this work. However, the epideictic function of these texts makes it difficult to really break away from old values, even as new, competing values are celebrated. For example, Barthes claims that "the unity of a text is not in its origin but in its destination" (p. 54). Barthes, like Cixous and Derrida, challenge the idea that a text posses unity in the sense of singularity or singular interpretation or logic. However, in order to challenge the concept of unity, Barthes still celebrates unity as a shared, universal value attached to a text. In the following sections, I explore more closely the ways in which Barthes, Cixous, and Derrida celebrate and challenge shared values of identity, power, and mulitplicity. I tease apart the ways in which values are upheld and deconstructed as these authors conceptualize writing.

**Poststructuralist Subjectivity**

*"Barthe's writing compares to Derrida when Derrida talks about the absence of the reader. When people think someone is going to read their work, they will write it differently than it was just for themselves. Barthe flips the scenario and says that the reader will interpret the text differently when they know the identity of the author. After reading Barthe and Derrida's pieces, I have a better understanding of what it means to be a writer and the important roles that the author and readers have."*

--First Year Writing Student Reflection

As I have argued thus far, Barthes (1967), Derrida (1988), and Cixous (1976) use

epideictic tactics to highlight shared values and to challenge or shift the way that these values are conceptualized. One important value celebrated by the metaphor of voice is the implicit desire for connecting with a subject behind and in a text. This subject might be conceptualized as an autonomous, authentic, coherent individual, or it might be conceptualized as a socially constructed and fluid group. Even in poststructuralist texts, the metaphor of voice invokes a human element in the text: the connection between a reader and a writer is understood and celebrated through this metaphor. I see these poststructuralist texts as continuing the epideictic work of celebrating the human element of a text, even as they work to shift agency toward the reader and to reconceptualize subjectivity and writerly identity. The metaphor of voice appears as one manifestation of this epideictic work which celebrates what Lanham (2003; 2007) describes as the human quality of a text. As such, these texts work to celebrate the value of identity, while at the same time challenging and reconceptualizing what writerly identity--or subjectivity--looks like.

One important consistency across the texts discussed in this dissertation is the conceptualization of *voice* as some "human" quality in a text. In previous chapters I explored this value in terms of celebrating the concept of identity, authenticity, and naturalness. I argue that these texts are not concerned with an individual identity like those discussed in Chapter 2, or only with an ideological group identity as those discussed in Chapter 3. For Cixous (1976), voice serves as metonymy for a group that has been constructed through language, "a universal woman subject" (p. 880). As there is "no general woman, no one typical woman," it is important to understand this universal

woman identity marker as always already attached to language. The universal woman is not a composite of individual female people. It marks and celebrates a kind of humanity in a text, but one that is born through a text and which also shapes and constructs the text. Similarly, Barthes (1967) values the humanness in a text or writerly subjectivity in a way that displaces the value of an authentic *individual person*, saying there is "the necessity to substitute language itself for the subject hitherto supposed to be its owner" (p. 50).

The value of "humanness" in a text is often expressed through conceptualizing an agentive, writerly subject. As such, the poststructuralist subject, and poststructuralist theory at large, is often conceived of as antithetical to the metaphor of voice as it is deployed by folks like Elbow (Bowden,1999; Farrin, 2005). Farrin, for example, critiques the metaphor of voice by directly citing Barthes's (1967) "Death of the Author," arguing that we no longer believe in a coherent, authentic self behind a text. Similarly, Bowden critiques a metaphor that relies on a coherent, singular self that can be present in a text, saying that even though certain authors (including Elbow in his later work) deploy the metaphor in a way that celebrates multiple, constructivist concepts of self, the metaphor will *always* invoke an understanding of self that is autonomous and coherent. As I mentioned above, Farrin builds a pedagogy off of his critique of voice that detaches voice from an individual self and Bowden rejects the use of the metaphor completely. Both authors argue that texts such as Derrida's (1988) and Barthes's make it impossible to both use the metaphor of voice the ways it has been used in expressivist circles *and* to accept a poststructuralist notion of identity and language. However, scholars such as Elbow (1994b; 2012) disagree, and argue that the metaphor and its usefulness in

discussions of writing has not changed in light of poststructuralist challenges to an autonomous, coherent self.

I argue that poststructuralist theory does not render the metaphor of voice obsolete, but rather challenges and adds to its complexity, largely in the way that poststructuralist texts de and reconstruct identity and subjectivity at large. Lanham (2003; 2007) stresses voice as a metaphor that gets at the human quality in a text; Barthes (1967), Derrida (1988), and Cixous (1976) are still concerned with the human quality of texts and celebrate the value I call *identity*, even as they challenge a specific, widespread understanding of identity. Rather than understood as a coherent, autonomous individual, a poststructuralist subject is constructed in and through the language she uses. At the same time, the subject uses language in order to conceptualize both herself and the world. The text itself is more important for Barthes and Derrida than the individual behind the text; however, poststructuralist texts still value and emphasize humanness in a text by focusing on a conceptualization of that subject. Cixous, for example, is highly interested in conceptualizing feminine writing, and much of her work is spent conceptualizing a writing subject that creates and is created through writing. Cixous's subject does have some agency, which she emphasizes at length in her text. Further, the text and the act of writing is highly tied to a feminine body. However, importantly, this emphasis on a subject, a human, or a body does not celebrate a belief in an autonomous, coherent individual that exists *outside of or previously to the act of writing.* Similarly, for Barthes, the scriptor is born with a text. The writing subject, the human quality of a written text that allows for the connection between reader and writer, is an important element in

Cixous, Barthes, and Derrida's discussions of writing. These writing subjects are conceptualized differently than by authors I discuss in previous chapters in that they are not imagined as distinct from or existing prior to the text. They are not eternal beings that pour themselves into each text they create; they are created in the text both as they write and again each time a text is read.

Detaching the text from the individual person who creates it is one major humanist critique of poststructuralist philosophy; the logical uptake of this detachment might be something like Farrin's (2005) pedagogy which detaches the individual from the text and from "voice." The follow through of Farrin's logic takes an individual out of a text in a way that dramatically downplays the ways in which language creates individual identity, or the degree to which an individual can attach his identity and value to "his" language. A critique of Farrin's pedagogy, and of the postructural theories behind it, is that the human is too much removed from the act of writing. However, I argue that Barthes and the like do not work to remove a human from writing, but rather shift focus on understanding textual voice differently. The key difference that I see in how the human quality of a text is conceptualized comes in marrying the writing subject with language to create a sort of dialectic understanding of identity (this also feeds into the newly proposed value of multiplicity, which I discuss further below). While a text is detached from the concept of identity as eternal, coherent, and autonomous, the notion of identity itself is still an important part of poststructuralist discussions of writing. For Cixous (1976), Barthes (1967), and Derrida (1988), the writerly subject is not ignored. Indeed, a discussion of writing is very much tied to a discussion of the writerly subject. However,

the subject is dramatically reconceptualized as contextual, contingent, and multiple, and the importance of language in constructing subjectivity is emphasized.

Just as, according to Cixous (1976), Barthes (1967), and Derrida (1988), a subject's identity is highly tied to and constructed alongside the language she uses, a poststructuralist subject is heavily dependent upon her context. The importance of context and the emphasis on language itself pushes away from understanding textual voice as a value that necessarily celebrates an individual *person.* Derrida emphasizes the importance of context to the extent that each act of communication is unique from each other act; a writing subject is born of her context, as is the text she creates, as is the text born again each time it is read. According to Barthes "language knows a 'subject,' not a 'person,' and this subject, empty outside of the very speech-act which defines it, suffices to 'hold' language, i.e., to exhaust it" (p. 50). The idea that "language knows a 'subject,' not a 'person,'" is very different from Elbow's expressivist understanding and even critical and feminist understandings of the writer; for Elbow the person who is existed before the text might be understood as putting some part of herself into a text, while for Barthes the writerly subject is more important that any one person. Barthes's understanding of a writing subject who is called into being by the very text she creates detaches the text from the person *behind* it. Although he does not emphasize a discussion of the nature of context as does Derrida, Barthes's description of a writer as "subject" rather than "person" who comes into being only during the act of writing demonstrates a similar, implicit emphasis on context. Rather than a subject conceptualized as eternal, a subject is conceptualized as highly contextual.

Part of the work of conceptualizing subjectivity as a dialectic relationship between individual and language happens through constructing a subject that does not precede the text. Barthes (1967), in the quote above, claims that the "speech-act" "defines" the subject; the subject does not exist before or exterior to the speech-act that creates him. The text is not an outpouring of a previously existing, autonomous, singular individual. Barthes critiques the myth of the Author, who "is always conceived as the past of his own book" (p. 52). On the other hand, according to Barthes, "the modern *scriptor* is born *at the same time* as his text" (p. 52). Again, here, this understanding of the relationship between writer and text downplays not the connection between a subject and a text--in fact, this connection is incredibly powerful in that they are responsible for each others' very existence. However, this valuing of a relationship between subject and text, and the value celebrated by the voice metaphor, is detached from a concept of identity as autonomous and coherent. Identity is not something that solidifies itself external to the text.

One important way in which the value of identity is reconceptualized as born with and through language, or through a text, comes across in a detachment of identity from the values of authenticity and nature. In these texts by Barthes (1967), Cixous (1976), and Derrida (1988), the writing subject is neither autonomous nor independent; she is, rather, a product of the structures that shape her, which is similar to how a writing subject is conceptualized in the critical and feminist texts I analyzed in Chapter 3. However, unlike in these critical and feminist texts, in poststructuralist texts the writing subject is so much a constructed product that she almost completely ceases to exist outside of or

beyond the text. Rather than understanding this work as detaching the value of humanness from a text, this work opens up the possibilities of reader and writer interactions through text. Rather than text that is beholden to a single authorial voice, a text is understood as negotiation, and as containing multiple voices, born again and again each time it is read. Pushing against the association between identity, voice, and singularity, Barthes argues that the modern invention of the author assumes that the work is a direct reflection of the author, and "the voice of one and the same person, the *author,* which was transmitting his 'confidences'" (p. 50). Barthes, throughout this piece, attempts not to kill the value of humanness, but destroy the specific myth of Author, which he works to change from an eternal truth to a culturally specific myth by identifying and challenging its origin. The textual voice is not "the voice of one and the same person," as the textual voice, which Barthes instead aligns with the writing subject, or with the scriptor, exists with and through the text. That quality in a text that voice celebrates is still celebrated, though it is dramatically reconceived. The values of authenticity and naturalness (which I identified in Chapter 2 as celebrated by Elbow and which the critical and feminist texts I analyzed in Chapter 3 work to detach from voice and power) are detached from the value of a power as this writing subject is reconceptualized.

Undoing this seemingly eternal truth regarding how a writing subject is conceptualized (as autonomous and coherent), Barthes (1967) instead argues that "To write is to reach, through a preliminary impersonality...that point where not 'I' but only language functions" (p. 50). Here, Barthes works to still value what has (according to his

text) been devalued through the Author function. Impersonality is celebrated rather than devalued. A text is not merely an outpouring of an Author's coherent, autonomous, impenetrable self. The language itself constructs the voice and humanness of a text, and in the act of writing an individual can become more than himself, freed from the restrictions of a narrow relationship between Author and text. Just as for Barthes, for Cixous (1976), writing calls the subject into being. She positions a woman's identity as inherently connected to and structured through writing, saying that "Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it" (p. 881). For Cixous, writing is as essential and as intimate as any other thing connected with the physical body, and feminine writing must come from and through the body. Again, here, I argue that poststructuralist texts such as Cixous' do not devalue the human element of writing nor the writerly subject. Rather, they disassociate the values of authenticity or naturalness from the value of humanness in a text. Further, a connection between a subject and a text does not guarantee that the writerly subject has *ultimate control* over her text. According to both Barthes and Cixous, a subject is created through writing, and as such the subject is not singular, external, prior to the text.

Just as writing calls a subject into being, these poststructuralist texts conceptualize writing as the erasure of individual identity. In this sense, a writerly subject and writerly *power* is dramatically reconceptualized. Barthes (1967) says that "Writing is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity into which our subject flees, the black-and-white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes" (p. 49). Here Barthes centers his discussion of writing and meaning-making around a discussion of the

writing subject. And, the writing subject is celebrated as it is disconnected from the concept of a coherent, autonomous individual. Writing is described as "neuter," as "composite," as not only disconnected from a writer's identity but "where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body who writes." Writing is presented here as almost anti-identity, as a moment of departure from any individual identity that might exist. Even while writing is tied to the body, as seen in Cixous's (1976) work, the voice in a text is not contingent on any one individual, coherent, autonomous body.

Subjectivity is conceptualized as "composite" while subjectivity itself is presented as a universal concern and a celebrated value. In other words, these authors do not downplay or deny the importance of writerly subjectivity in a discussion of writing. Subjectivity is celebrated and, at the same time, it is disassociated from individual identity.

Poststructuralist subjectivity is, importantly, celebrated and conceptualized as 1) still a necessary element to consider when discussing a text and 2) closely linked to and constructed through the text itself. Poststructuralist subjectivity is discussed in these texts in a way that does not work to dismiss the importance or value of a writerly subject nor remove the human element from a discussion of writing. At the same time, these texts work to value a subject and disconnect this value from concepts of an individual as coherent and autonomous, existing prior to and exerting control over a text in a very singular, univocal way. As subjectivity is still valued and the understanding of humaness is still an important part of the discussions of writing, the "universal" value of power is also reconceptualized as it is celebrated, which I discuss in the next section.

**Readers and Writers and Agency: The Value of Power**

In this section I explore how Derrida (1988), Cixous (1976), and Barthes (1967) treat power as a key, universally celebrated value attached to writing, and the ways that this celebration serves an epideictic function. At the same time, these authors shift the way that power, an epideictic value, is conceptualized and challenge values often associated with power. While power is celebrated as a value attached to voice across divergent theories, the poststructuralist texts discussed in this chapter use epideictic means to at once celebrate and deconstruct traditional understandings of power. They draw on their audiences' assumed shared valuing of power, their assumption that writing *is* and *should be* powerful, and then uphold that value while challenging the ways their audiences might imagine power as enacted through writing. Most importantly, power is disassociated from control and reconceived as shared and as multiple. Especially for Derrida and Barthes, power is shifted from author to reader as it relates to making meaning in a text. In the model of communication constructed through Derrida and Barthes the "power" in written communication is conceived of as bi-directional, shared by reader and writer. Further, as authorial power and agency is limited, the reader's power and agency is made more important and more central to the celebration of this shared value. The reader's agency is not limited to listening or silencing; the reader actually holds power in that she makes meaning with the text as she reads it.

Power, as it is presented in these texts, can be understood as what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) call an "eternal" or "universal truth"; the concept of power is challenged, questioned, and deconstructed, but the *value* of power is never overtly called into question. For Elbow (1973), as I discussed in Chapter 2, power is realized when an

individual writer cultivates her unique, natural voice in order to make a connection with another reader. For the texts that I analyzed in Chapter 3, power is linked to social and political participation, and can be realized either individually or through group identification and membership. Like the texts explored in previous chapters, these poststructuralist texts celebrate the value of power, often enacted as reader and writer agency, through the epideictic metaphor of voice. One significant change in how power is conceptualized, but not devalued, that I focus on here is the reconceptualization of power as dialectic and shared. For example, power is shared among readers, writers, and language itself; power is no longer the providence of the author alone. According to Barthes (1967), "It is language which speaks, not the author" (p. 50). Throughout his text Barthes celebrates the value of power while, at the same time, reversing a myth about where power exists and who the subject is. Here Barthes still uses the word "speaks" to express an already existing, epideictic value attached to writing. "Speaks" plays a metaphorical role in this quote, and signals power, understood as control or agency. The power, however, rests with language itself, not the author of a text. Barthes detaches an author from his text while at the same time strengthening adherence to the value of power and agency already associated with a text 'speaking.' As identity is reconceptualized as contextual and as shared, so too must power be reconceptualized as contextual and shared. As identity and power are reimagined in this way, the value of control is called into question; how can power be enacted if the author's identity is no longer rooted in coherence, autonomy, or even control over the language that calls her into being?

**Power and Control.** For Cixous (1976), Barthes (1967), and Derrida (1988)

power is enacted through a dialectic relationship among reader, writer, and the text itself. For the texts discussed in previous chapters, reader agency is often limited as either "hearing" or "silencing" writerly voices. As such, communication is conceptualized as a linear action, beginning with the writer, moving through text, and ending with a reader. The reader and writer are connected through the text, but the agency celebrated by the metaphor of voice moves in one direction, from writer to reader. Teacher agency, similarly, is not understood as co-meaning-making with a student text. Teacher agency is enacted through either *giving power over* to students (hearing student voices) or *taking power away* from students (silencing student voices). Luke and Gore (1992) warn teachers and theorists not to think of power as such a "zero-sum game," and I argue that poststructuralist texts such as those discussed in this chapter are useful artifacts in negotiating a space with students where writing is still understood in terms of power and power is *valued* but power is not so heavily linked to writer control.

Cixous (1976) builds her argument for a feminine writing on the base, shared value of power, and the related understanding that power is enacted through writing in relation to authorial control. However, she challenges control as an appropriate value by associating it not just with authorial power and meaning-making but also with the disempowerment of the feminine subject. On the one hand, Cixous accepts this premise in order to show the degree to which not controlling her own subjectivity (as it is conceived of in masculine texts) has taken away women's power to really write or participate in meaning making at all. On the other hand, Cixous plays around with the shared 'eternal' truths that 1) writing is powerful and that 2) to control language is to

execute power by following these truths to their logical conclusions. If making writing is controlling language and controlling language is to have power, and if men have been doing the writing and thus controlling the language, how can women come to power? "I write woman: woman must write woman" (Cixous, p. 881); men had the control because they were creating woman subjects. As such, the value of power is celebrated while the value of control is brought into question.

Derrida (1988) and Barthes (1967) take a different approach to questioning the value of control by working to demonstrate the limitations and even impossibility of authorial control. Language is never completely controllable, and if control is no longer a reasonable goal, then power and meaning-making must be understood differently, without relying on authorial control as a barometer for writerly power. For example, Barthes aligns power with language itself, detaching language from the author's control, by using automatic writing to illustrate how language does not necessarily come from within the writer. Although Elbow (1973) advocates for a pedagogy that utilizes the practice of automatic writing, which was a key practice for surrealist authors, "Surrealism helped desacralize the image of the Author" (Barthes, p. 51) and is seen in such texts as Barthes's not as a way to get at the true inner voice of the writer but rather as evidence that the writer is not really in control of the meaning in his texts. The language itself makes the meaning, and the writer does not come before the language.

Both Barthes (1967) and Derrida (1988) work to detach the concept of control from the celebrated value of power. One way in which control is challenged comes through shifting meaning-making, and agency conceived of as such, from the writer to the reader.

Barthes most directly celebrates power while shifting agency from writer and critic (the teacher might occupy this role) to reader. Derrida, too, challenges the idea of textual power as understood through the lens of *control.* Cixous (1976) explores power differently from Barthes and Derrida, focusing mostly on writer rather than reader, but still works to reconceptualize power in terms of limited individual agency. Barthes deploys the metaphor of voice in order to describe what typically gives the text a cohesive meaning. However, he challenges conflating that textual cohesion with authorial control or agency. He begins his short essay with a quote from Balzac, asking his audience who "speaks" that quote. Answering in his concluding paragraph that "No one (i.e., no 'person') says it: its source, its voice is not the true site of writing, it is reading" (p. 54) Barthes at once celebrates the notion that the text has a voice, that the voice is "its source" of meaning (and I argue power), while detaching the voice from authorial control. He deploys voice as an epideictic metaphor while questioning the understanding of authorial agency that this metaphor typically celebrates. Here power is shifted to the reader, conceptualized as the "source" and "voice" of the text.

Detaching voice from the author challenges how his audience would typically understand and celebrate authorial identity and authorial power. In the quote above, Barthes (1967) shifts the focus of voice, and with voice the value of power conceptualized as meaning-making, from the author to the reader. The use of the voice metaphor still celebrates the value of power, and does so in language that his audience would recognize and celebrate. The epideictic history of the metaphor of voice, and the epideictic function of familiar, celebrated metaphors, give Barthes an argumentative base

from which to challenge unexamined values. Barthes attaches power to meaning-making, as do Cixous (1976) and Derrida (1988). At the same time, meaning-making, and power, are detached from the idea of a coherent, individual author who can exercise control over a text. Barthes, like Derrida, emphasizes a shift in power from the author to the reader. Meaning-making is still conceived of as a powerful act, but power is shifted and shared.

Like in Barthes (1967) "Death of the Author," Derrida's (1988) "Signature, Event, Context" conceives of power as even more suspect and shared between reader, writer and text. Derrida still positions power as a shared value; at the base of his discussion of communication, power is an assumed concern, particularly power as enacted through maintaining control of one's intended meaning. He repositions power as detached from authorial control by emphasizing the power, control, and work that a reader does in regard to making meaning with a text. One way in which Derrida challenges the notion of authorial power comes in his discussion of the role of "signature" in perceived writerly control. He pokes fun at the shared acceptance of signature as standing in for authorial control, for authorial presence, saying that while a signature stands in for "the 'author' as a 'person who utters,' as a 'source,' [...] By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical nonpresence of the signer" (p. 20). As signature, for Derrida, is one relic of power understood as authorial control, as it marks a writer's attempt to make himself *an author* and it imposes that author on the text even in his absence. Derrida points out the irony that it is a mark of control that is only necessary because the written text is *not* rigorously controlled by the author. The author is not present in his text; if he

were, the signature would be unnecessary. He ends his own essay with his signature, mocking his audience and again pointing out the absurdity of control.

A major distinction that I note in poststructuralist conceptualizations of voice and power is precisely this shift from a focus on authorial power to a reader's power in actively creating meaning with a text. For example, Derrida (1988) argues that writing cannot be understood as the transference of meaning from *writer* to *reader*. Language, according to Derrida, is never "univocal" or "rigorously controllable" by the utterer, despite conventional attempts to exercise that kind of control. However, rather than abandon writing along with the abandonment of the hope for that type of control, he argues that "we are witnessing not an end of writing [...] but rather the increasingly powerful historical expansion of a general writing" (p. 20). Derrida, like Cixous (1976) and Barthes (1967), detach authorial control from the value of power. Writing is not powerful because a writer controls meaning-making; in fact, Derrida works to demonstrate that it is impossible for a writer to control meaning-making, and that writing's real aim should not be absolutely control over language and meaning. Writing is powerful, not because of authorial control, but because of its iterability and its very ability to extend so far beyond authorial utterance. I argue that Derrida's text, in a less overt way than Barthes', also celebrates power conceptualized as reader meaning-making rather than writer meaning-making. A text is iterable even after the author has died. Derrida argues that while others have conceived of writing in terms of the reader's absence, the other important absence to consider is the writer's inherent absence from a text. Shifting the focus from readerly to writerly absence and, in effect, shifting the focus

from authorial to reader presence at the site of meaning-making, again shifts the notion of power towards the reader and detaches the value of power from author/writer control.

In these poststructuralist texts, the act of reading is powerful; for Derrida (1988) and Barthes (1967), power is valued and attached to the reader as a potential site for meaning-making. While Cixous (1976) focuses on the writer--she is writing to writers who had previously only been readers, women whose identity had been constructed by male texts--she, too, discusses the importance of readers in meaning-making and still conceptualizes power as shared. For Cixous, as for others, power is understood as enacted not just in the act of writing but when writing is *read* or when a voice is *heard.* Cixous says to women, "You've written a little, but in secret," and for a text to be powerful it must not be produced "in secret" but rather for some audience (p. 881). Cixous celebrates the existing, shared value of power enacted through public, read writing in order to value a different *kind* of writing, which she names feminine writing. Feminine writing, according to Cixous, reverses the binary between mind and body and attaches writing, which is already always linked to power, to the body rather than the mind. Women, too, are "always already" attached to the body; so, Cixous's text works, by linking new values to old values, to attach women to writing. She says that "women are body. More body, hence more writing," (p. 888). She says that if women are traditionally "written" instead of "writing," then she must work to reverse this myth, to "make it [discourse] hers [...] taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of" (p. 888). Power happens when women can write themselves rather than be written, when her "speech is no longer

suppressed" by a discourse that works to at once construct and exclude her (p. 888). Writing--taking ownership over language--is power, for Cixous. Not to write is to be "suppressed" by the discourse that writes you.

**Power and Silence.** In addition to challenging the notion of control, and in shifting the concept of power from writer to reader, these texts celebrate and challenge the value of power through strengthening the link between the concepts of *powerlessness* and *silence*. I argue that an emphasis on silence is another epideictic tactic that strengthens adherence to the shared, eternal value of power, even as power is critiqued and reconceptualized. Barthes's (1967) text works to "silence" the Author/critic so that the reader can find a "voice." Cixous (1976) celebrates the value of power is to emphasize the destruction that comes with a lack of power. Like the feminist theory (much of which directly cites Cixous) and the critical theory that I discussed in Chapter 3, the idea of silencing is paired with power to create a binary of voice/silence. Voice is associated with power and lacking a voice, or being silenced, is to have no power. Even Elbow (1973) emphasizes the importance of having a voice as opposed to being silenced by one's own anxieties. Not writing, whether due to some personal choice or to systemic oppression, is to be powerless. Cixous describes women as "the repressed of culture, our lovely mouths gagged with pollen, our wind knocked out of us" (p. 882). As for all the authors discussed in this dissertation, "to write, to dare to speak" holds a lot of power for Cixous (p. 881). In conceptualizing power as the thing that comes with having a voice, silence is conceptualized as impotence.

Silence, which is deployed to signify the absence of voice and the absence of

power, can also happen when one takes on the voice of a dominant culture. Cixous (1976), emphasizing the way that dominant culture infiltrates "individual" voice, says that "there is such a thing as *marked* writing" and that writing is most often marked as masculine (p. 882). Cixous urges her readers to actively work against such marked writing, which she positions as a powerful act. Taking a very different view such marked writing, Farrin (2005) promotes a pedagogy that is essentially devoid of 'voice' (even as he deploys that same metaphor to epideictic ends) by suggesting that the best way to empower students is to teach them to switch between different voices that fit a given context. Although students are producing texts, Cixous would claim that they are still being silenced. She says that there is a "text of her self" that woman "must urgently learn to speak" (p. 883); rather than mimic the dominant voice Cixous advocates shifting the paradigm that makes certain voices dominant in the first place. As such, Cixous (and with her other poststructuralist feminists such as Irigaray) celebrate the value of power much in the same ways as critical and feminist texts and even in ways similar to expressivist texts: power is celebrated by making one's true voice--however that "true voice" is conceptualized and constructed--heard and taken seriously by your audience.

**Power as Participation.** As for the texts I analyzed in chapters 2 and 3, in the poststructuralist texts I analyze in this chapter, power is conceptualized and achieved through social and political participation. As such, celebrating the value of power strengthens adherences to the conceptualization of writing as a primarily social act. Derrida (1988) goes so far as to say that a written language must be understood by at least two people in order to be considered a language. If a text is never read, it is not

powerful. Moreover, if a text is never read, it is not engaging its primary purpose of communication. Cixous (1976) urges women to write from their bodies, as themselves, so that they can participate in the structures that previously suppressed her. Although oppressive structures worked to silence and to construct an identity for her that must be silenced, her participation as the subject constructed is the key way to both achieve individual power, and change the valuing of certain kinds of texts so that the group marked by a woman's voice can also come to power. She says that women must write, which can be understood as:

> An act that will also be marked by woman's *seizing* the occasion to *speak,* hence her shattering entry into history, which has always been based *on her suppression.* To write and thus to forge for herself the antilogos weapon. To become *at will* the taker and initiator, for her own write, in every symbolic system, in every political process. (p. 884)

In this quote, power as participation is a celebrated value; there is no need to convince the reader that participation *should* be valued, nor that participation can be seen as power. Further, power as participation is linked specifically to political participation and is understood in the context of the structures already in place that might work to prevent participation or to silence these voices.

Cixous's (1976) text uses metaphors that continue to link voice to this value of power conceptualized as participation. She talks about the need for a woman to seize "the occasion to *speak*" and the fact that it is through speaking that a woman may enter "into history." Even in this text that focuses on women's writing Cixous deploys

metaphors attached with voice, such as "speak" and "laugh." A woman must write in order to become "the taker and initiator [...] in every symbolic system, in every political process." Using these speech metaphors allows Cixous to establish a kind of writing, however, that is "the antilogos weapon," a kind of writing that is more closely linked to the body and which celebrates values not commonly associated with writing. Writing and power are already linked for Cixous's readers; woman and the body (and along with the body voice, speech, laughter) are also linked. So, in order to overturn current power structures, Cixous works to link the body (and thus woman) to writing, so that women can achieve the kind of power that not only participates in but undoes and reconstructs how the very value of power is understood. In order to celebrate power, Cixous says "women should break out of the snare of silence" (p. 884) and enter into these power structures--encapsulated in and constructed through writing--that previously silenced and excluded them.

Like Cixous (1976), Barthes (1967) celebrates this eternal value and shared understanding of power as participation while still shifting control from writer to reader. The important participation for Barthes is the participation of meaning making by readers. He says that "Classical criticism has never been concerned with the reader; for that criticism, there is no other man in literature than the one who writes" (p. 55). The texts explored in the previous two chapters were certainly more focused on writers than on readers, although readers did play an important role in the way power was enacted. For Elbow (1973), a writer must connect with a reader, and for both Giroux (1997) and Rakow and Wackwitz (2004), writers can only achieve voice if those in power

(specifically, *readers* who possess some material or political power), are willing and able to hear their voices. Here, though, the agency shifts from the writer to the reader, and this relationship changes. Barthes says that "We are no longer so willing to be the dupes of such antiphrases" (p. 55). For Barthes, the reader should be the focus in our discussions of meaning-making and text.

Power as participation is valued among these authors, but Cixous (1976), Derrida (1988), and Barthes (1967) place distinct emphasis on how power as participation is understood particularly in relation to control. Cixous says that "the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously" in how they have been represented in text (p. 882). Women have not had control over how they were represented, and this lack of control is a key part of systemic repression of women in writing. Barthes and Derrida focus on misrepresentation in textual communication, too. Barthes, however, frames misrepresentation as an overemphasis of the critic's role in interpretation. Derrida completely reconceptualizes the idea of misrepresentation by opening up the possibility of multiple, "correct" meanings. He begins his essay challenging the notion that communication is "univocal" or "unique" in meaning, while saying that communication does still happen. Misrepresentation is a more subtle, but important, theme for Barthes and Derrida than for Cixous, and for each author misrepresentation happens when only one individual or one group of individuals exercises complete power over textual meaning.

Derrida (1988), Barthes (1967), and Cixous (1976) celebrate the 'eternal' value of power, but power through participation looks different because it is not just the author's

voice that matters. Barthes says that "Mallarmé's whole poetics consists in suppressing the author in favor of writing (and thereby restoring, as we shall see, the reader's place)" (p. 50). While power is presented as an eternal truth and a celebrated value, power is conceptualized as shared meaning making. Importantly, meaning-making shared by those who have not traditionally had a recognized role in meaning-making. For Cixous, this means recognizing the role of woman in relation to power writing. Cixous argues that women had, previously and overwhelmingly, not been meaning-makers but rather had been written. Feminine writing recognizes the potential for the written to become the writer, for power to shift in a way that does not just replace male writing with a text written by a woman, but that reconceives control as a displaced value in favor of new values like multiplicity. Feminine writing finds power in a lack of control.

Derrida (1988) and Barthes (1967) treat power as participation differently in that, like Cixous (1976), they celebrate power while questioning the value of authorial control. For Derrida and for Barthes, authorial control over meaning-making in a text is at best impossible and at worst damaging. It is impossible because meaning is understood as inherently both plural and shared. Authorial intention, as Barthes points out, is only one aspect of textual meaning, and is often indecipherable or unknowable. Derrida challenges understanding communication in terms of metaphor, meaning that communication is not a matter of an author translating his thoughts into language so that the reader can decode the language and understand the author's original thoughts. The context, and the very language used to express those thoughts, shape the thoughts themselves. Further, a reader brings her own context to a text and rather than deciphering

authorial meaning she creates new meaning with the text. Thus, a degree of control over meaning is impossible, since meaning is always shifting depending on context and on individual interpretation. Because Barthes and Derrida work to position writing and reading as a shared meaning-making process among reader, writer/author, and text, power as participation is understood as still valuable but starkly distinct from power as participation understood through the value authorial control.

In conclusion, power is presented as a universally celebrated value attached to a discussion of writing. Further, power is understood (as in the texts discussed in previous chapters) in terms of participation. Power is celebrated as a desired outcome of writing, and the powerful thing about a text is connected to the epideictic metaphor of voice. The humanness in a text, understood in terms of a connection between text and body by Cixous (1976) or understood in terms of building a relationship between reader and writer by Barthes (1967) and Derrida (1988), gives a text power and is celebrated in relation to power understood as participation. A text unread or produced in secret is not a powerful text; a text is powerful when it provides some concept of a connection between reader, writer, and language itself.

The epideictic celebration of power as participation, however, enables these authors to shift the understanding of power away from a celebration of control in order to view power as shared and negotiated. As such, power understood as control over meaning is dismantled in these texts. Power understood as control is also power understood in terms of singularity. In other words, according to this 'old model' of power, an author exerts power by controlling the meaning for the reader in such a way as the meaning of a text

can only be understood as singular. Barthes (1967) and Derrida (1988) work to destroy this notion of power associated with singularity and control, and Cixous (1976) likewise works to destroy the value of singularity as it is attached to writing and logic and order (all values often associated with power and writing). As control and singularity are displaced, the value I call multiplicity is presented as a new, conflicting value attached to the old, shared value of power. Multiplicity is perhaps the biggest marker of poststructuralist values associated with writing and with voice; it is also perhaps the value that most challenges or complicates the epideictic metaphor of voice in text.

**Multiplicity Valued: Rejecting Singularity and Limitations of Epideictic**

Barthes (1967), Derrida (1988), and Cixous (1976), present the value of power as a shared, universal value that the audience can adhere to. In their celebration of this already established, shared value, they link the new, controversial value that I call multiplicity. The value of multiplicity is celebrated through conceptualizing meaning-making as shared, through conceptualizing identity as inherently multiple, and through displacing old values often attached to writing of singularity and rationality.

**Multiplicity and meaning.** One way in which multiplicity is presented as a value attached to voice comes in reconceptualizing meaning in a text as inherently multiple. Meaning is multiple *because* a text contains voice and all the things which voice celebrates: the human quality in a text, that which allows for a connection between readers and writers, is always inherently multiple. Both Barthes (1967) and Derrida (1988) work to value the notion that a text gives rise to multiple meanings, rather than containing one meaning placed in it by its author. Barthes says that "To assign an Author

to a text is to impose a brake on it [...] to close writing," which would be to limit the imaginative possibilities of the text (p. 53). Barthes says that "the book itself is but a tissue of signs, endless imitation, infinitely postponed" (p. 53). Likewise presenting multiplicity of meaning as an inevitability, Cixous (1976) claims that "this practice [of feminine writing] can never be theorized, enclosed, coded--which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist" (p. 885). This understanding of a writing practice celebrated *because* it "can never be theorized, enclosed, coded" works to value multiplicity by attaching the idea of multiplicity to the already valued practice of power through meaning-making.

Shifting the role of meaning-making from Author to reader inherently displaces the value of control in favor of valuing multiplicity and possibility. There is only ever one Author; there are infinite potential readers. Barthes (1967) argues that "there is a site where this multiplicity is collected, and this site is not the author, as has hitherto been claimed, but the reader: the reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any of them being lost, all the citations out of which a writing is made" (p. 54). Here Barthes values meaning-making as "as site where this multiplicity is collected." Further, I see this quote as valuing power; despite shifting and understanding of power towards a celebration of multiplicity, there is still something to be collected, to be "inscribed." Writing is still made, here. Multiplicity is valued without completely overturning understanding writing as meaning making and understanding meaning making as a powerful act that someone must perform. However, meaning is multiple, as meaning comes from collecting and inscribing citations "without any of them being lost." There is a tricky toeing the line here by Barthes as he introduces multiplicity as a way to

understand writing's goal rather than understanding it as a communicative failure or a problem to be resolved.

The duality of writing itself is expressed as Barthes (1967) argues that "writing constantly posits meaning, but always in order to evaporate it: writing seeks a systematic exemption of meaning" (p. 54). For poststructuralist authors, writing is concerned with meaning, but meaning is not singular or eternal or controlled. Similarly disavowing the end goal of control in communication, Derrida (1988) begins his text questioning singularity in communication, demonstrating that a words is never "univocal" or "rigorously controllable" (p. 1). At the same time, this inability to control meaning does not limit our capabilities for meaning-making. Derrida says that "indeed, this word [communication] opens up a semantic domain that precisely does not limit itself to semantics, semiotics, and even less to linguistics" (p. 1). The displacement of control and the related values of singularity ("unique, univocal" qualities of language) opens up the possibility for more communication. Like Barthes, Derrida displaces singularity in favor of valuing multiplicity, not only because it is the only real option (language *cannot* be controlled in such a rigorous way) but it is also presented as a *better* option. Multiplicity is a valued quality of writing.

In addition to being valued, multiplicity in writing is unavoidable, as written communication is inherently multiple. Meaning-making, which is still valued and attached to powerful writing, is reconceptualized, too. Meaning-making is not understood as a singular author imposing meaning or controlling textual meaning. Rather, meaning-making is reconceptualized in ways that attach meaning to multiplicity

and to concepts like chaos and dissonance. For Cixous (1976) writing is best understood as laughter, a metaphor associated with voice but disassociated with reason and control. Cixous constantly uses language that celebrates an understanding of woman and of feminine writing while also celebrating woman and feminine as intensely individual and personal while also shared and constructed. Barthes (1967), too, describes the voice in a text as having a destination (in the reader, which each time it happens is a personal, individual act) and as multiple and shared. According to Barthes, "a text consists of multiple writings, proceeding from several cultures and entering into dialogue, into parody, into contestation" (p. 54). Derrida (1988), too, in his discussion of context, complicates context to the point that each reader's context is intensely singular, but each individual is also made up of immeasurable moments of context, as is each text, each writer, each interaction with a text. Writing is inherently multiple, as it is entrenched in language and citationality "proceeding from several cultures and entering into dialogue."

Derrida (1988) argues that "a written sign carries with it a force that breaks with its context, that is, with the collectivity of presences organizing the moment of its inscription" and that, further, this rupture "is not an accidental predicate but *the very structure of the written text*" (emphasis my own, p. 9). Derrida also demonstrates the multiplicity, or slipperiness, of language itself in his own writing, offer synonyms when articulating a concept. The very first line of his text challenges the notion of singularity in communication, demonstrating that a word cannot correspond to a concept that is ever completely "unique, univocal, rigorously controllable" (p. 1). Multiplicity does not impede communication; Derrida works to disassociate multiplicity from ambiguity,

largely through his focus on context, saying that "the ambiguous field of the world 'communication' can be massively reduced by the limits of what is called a *context*" (p. 2). However, even the concept of context is made increasingly multiple, as Derrida claims that "a context is never absolutely determinable" or "its determination can never be entirely certain or saturated" (p. 3). Again, for poststructuralist authors such as Derrida, writing is powerful and this power comes in meaning-making, but meaning-making is not associated with control or singularity. Rather, meaning-making is conceptualized as inherently multiple, and multiplicity enriches (rather than deters from through rendering it ambiguous) written communication.

**Identity as multiple.** Authors discussed in previous chapters, particularly Elbow, work to value nature in relation to valuing power. For Elbow (1973), this valuing looks like a method of the writer turning inward in order to cultivate his authentic, internal voice and to pour that voice onto the page. In turn, valuing nature is apparent in the use of bodily, organic metaphors that tie writing to the body. Cixous (1976), Barthes (1967), and Derrida (1988), too, link writing to the body. However, their linkage of writing to the body celebrates multiplicity rather than authenticity or nature. Derrida, Barthes, and Cixous's "body" is a constructed body, one borne of context, citationality, and writing itself. For Cixous, male writing creates woman's body, for male readers and for women readers and writers. So, even as a woman is attached to her body, which is also the source of her writerly power, this body is at once hers and not hers: it is inherently (both physically and metaphorically) multiple.

Another example of displacing the value of *singularity* to instead celebrate the

value of *multiplicity*, Cixous (1976) claims that the metonymic figure used to celebrate a man's body, the phallus, represents singularity, logic, and control. Each of these secondary values (singularity, logic, control) is traditionally associated with writing and power and are often tied into the metaphor of voice. Cixous, along with Barthes and Derrida, displace these values in favor of conceptualizing power in a way that ties it to multiplicity. For example, according to Cixous, woman's body and feminine writing that comes from this body works "to shatter the framework of institutions to blow up the law, to break up the 'truth' with laughter" (p. 889). Rather than align itself with the phallus, which is linked to order, to truth, to logic, a feminine writing links itself to the woman's body, which is linked to chaos and multiplicity. The laugh comes up again and again as a new sort of "voice" metaphor, one which is celebrated in the way the metaphor typically is, but which is also illogical and chaotic. Cixous argues that "A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive" (p. 889). Again, Cixous celebrates the value of multiplicity, linking power to subversion and chaos and laughter, dissociating power from order and logic and reason.

Cixous (1976) conceptualizes identity not only using the metaphor of voice but through the related metaphor of laughter. She says that "Laughs exude from all our mouths; our blood flows and we extend ourselves without ever reaching an end; we never hold back our thoughts, our signs, our writing; and we're not afraid of lacking" (Cixous, p. 882). Identity is valued, but it is chaotic and multiple. Laughter cannot be contained or understood in a linear, controlled, masculine way. Rather than contained or controlled, laughter is endless. Cixous positions feminine identity, as it had been conceptualized and

controlled by masculine writing, as stifled at best and completely silenced at worst. Laughter represents the power of voice when it is reconceptualized as never "reaching an end" and when women "never hold back our thoughts, our signs, our writing; and we're not afraid of lacking."

Not only is writing consistently tied to the body through the use of metonymy--where a part of the body stands in for the whole body and the whole *self*--but, in these texts, various body parts are inextricably linked to each other. In this sense, for example, both the voice and the breath represent the author and the author's potence, and the voice and the breath are also clearly linked to each other. Cixous (1976) says to her readers, "Censor the body and you censor the breath and speech at the same time," stressing throughout her text that "Your body must be heard" (p. 883). "The body" "the breath" and "speech" are all attached and both independently and taken together stand in for the writer and her potential power. Cixous argues that the body has been devalued in traditional, male writing. Women are more tied to the body and men to logos, to logic and to words. She urges participation not through women rejecting their connection to the body (a connection which has been written by men, a constructed rather than natural connection). Rather, she urges participation through reconnecting the body with writing. I see this not only as Cixous deploying metaphor in order to celebrate new values, but also as metonymy in that the body is standing in for the whole person, for the essential self, in the way that the metaphor of voice stands in for that essential, whole self in Elbow's text.

For Cixous (1976), voice itself is multiple, rather that autonomous or singular.

Cixous emphasizes a woman's voice that is connected to the body, a voice that moves through and writes with the body. However, this is not the voice of an individual, nor is the voice understood as unifying. In fact, voice is important because it works to multiply and to shatter the notion of an origin or an individual contained within a text. She uses the term "equivoice" to describe the multiple voices that a woman has, the voices that call a woman into being (the voice of the mother, of the daughter, of the medusa, etc.). This voice is both contained and controlled by the woman writer and contains and controls her; this voice "launches your force; the rhythm that laughs you" and "makes all metaphors possible and desirable" (p 885). She further says that "Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battle-field" (p. 885).

Just as this understanding of identity frees the text from being locked down to one interpretation, it also frees the writer to approach writing with multiple possibilities—the text is not shackled to an Author, and the writer is not shackled to her past. The writer can be born again and again each time he writes. As Barthes (1967) argues, the writer loses his origin and enters into a realm of multiplicity as he writes. Derrida (1988) emphasizes a similar concept of writing and meaning-making in his discussion of the multiplicity of context and his very notion of diffèrance. According to Derrida, meaning is constantly shifting, not only on the reader's end but also on the writer's end. Despite attempts at controlling meaning, Derrida argues that one can never completely close meaning off; so long as a text can be read, and reread, it can give birth to multiple meanings in multiple contexts. For each of the poststructuralist authors analyzed in this

chapter, the identity of a text is itself multiple, just as authorial and reader identity (individual identity) are understood as multiple.

Barthes (1967) and Cixous (1976) invoke the body as they construct writerly and readerly identity. The body is, however, used to invoke this value of multiplicity rather than the values of nature or authenticity (which are, incidentally, often tied to singularity). Barthes deploys the voice metaphor as well as using "hand" as metonymy in describing the scriptor: "For him, on the contrary, his hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin--or at least with no origin but language itself, i.e., the very thing which ceaselessly calls any origin into question" (Barthes, p. 52). Here Barthes conceptualizes writerly identity that does not match a concept of authorial identity. Identity is an important element in a discussion of writing, but unlike a coherent, autonomous, singular author, a scriptor is not a voice but a "hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture." The identity of the writer is borne at the moment of writing. In this sense, Barthes displaces the value of writerly identity that depends on singularity, on an origin. This writer, which Barthes celebrates and which he argues is an older, *more eternal* concept than the "modern" concept of author, "ceaselessly calls any origin into question." The writing subject is not an individual, but a composite of language and so of every individual that has shaped that writing subjects linguistic context and catalogue. In this way, writer and reader identity are multiple and endless, reborn with each reading of a text, each new context.

**Displacing singularity.** One key way in which these poststructuralist authors use

epideictic means to value multiplicity comes in the form of their actively *displacing* the apparently competing value of singularity. As singularity is displace and disassociated from power, multiplicity is instead celebrated. Power is a central, key value attached to voice, and these authors build on that shared value and the language attached to it. For example, Cixous (1976) says that women, by writing through their bodies and reversing the binary value of body/logos, can create a new language that "laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word 'silence,'" (p. 887). Since silence is linked to impotence, a language that laughs at silence *by valuing multiplicity* and, thus, possibility, is an ultimate enactment of power. To laugh, for Cixous, is the ultimate expression of power, and at the same time is the ultimate displacement of singularity and control. Rather than understanding control as attached to power, Cixous works to demonstrate how control has taken power away from women by imposing a singularity on them and, thus, silencing their voices. Barthes (1967), too, links the value of multiplicity to the value of power in positing that embracing multiplicity of meaning opens up power for the reader. He argues that once the Author-God is killed, the possibility in making *multiple* meanings with a text opens up for the reader, and the reader is ultimately enacting power with the text. The Author-God represents the "old" value of singularity, which Barthes, Derrida (1988), and Cixous each work to displace.

Another example of valuing multiplicity over singularity happens when Barthes (1967) describes the text as "a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture" (p. 53). Here again the text is not pinned down to one Author, or to a singular interpretation. For the text to be a valued thing, it must not be closed off. A living text is

open to interpretations, and a dead text has already been "deciphered." Barthes says that "In multiple writing, in effect, everything is to be *disentangled*, but nothing *deciphered,*" (p. 53). Again working to value multiplicity over singularity, Cixous (1976) says that "a woman's body" (and so, feminine writing) "will make the old single-grooved mother tongue reverberate with more than one language" (p. 887). Like Barthes, Cixous celebrates a writing that is never closed off to just one meaning or even to just one language. Both authors work to displace the old value of "singular meaning" with a new value of "multiple meanings" and, multiplicity, more generally. In very different ways, both Barthes and Cixous construct a way to value writing that "will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes" (Cixous, p. 887). Not only, here, is singularity of meaning difficult or even possible to achieve, it is not even desired. These authors work to value multiplicity over singularity.

These authors work to value multiplicity by stitching it to the value of power and to the value of self, both values celebrated consistently by the authors discussed in this dissertation. They argue that the concept of a *self* has previously, traditionally, been valued in a way that associated any individual self with singularity. Derrida (1988), Barthes (1967), and Cixous (1976) again work to displace singularity by reconceptualizing the self, and power achieved through valuing self, as multiple. For example, Cixous links self and power to liberation, and liberation can only be achieved when singularity and control are displaced in favor of multiplicity. She says that woman "must write her self, because this is the invention of a *new insurgent* writing which, when the moment of her liberation has come, will allow her to carry out the indispensable

ruptures and transformations in her history" (Cixous, p. 883). This quote celebrates both the value of power--understood through agency, through liberation, through 'having a voice,'--and attaches the value of power to multiplicity. Liberation happens through "ruptures" and "transformations." Power happens through change, not through, as Elbow imagines it, rediscovery and cultivation of the part of a writer or voice that does not change. Like Elbow, a writer is encouraged to write "her self," but because identity is understood in terms of multiplicity, so is power understood as occurring through transformation and consistent ruptures.

Another way in which singularity is displaced in order to value multiplicity is in the challenging of origin stories. Derrida (1988), Cixous (1976), and Barthes (1967) work to overturn myths and challenge origins in order to create new myths and open up the possibility for multiple origins. Barthes challenges the value of origin as a concept in saying that writing is the act when "The voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins" (p. 49). Here Barthes deploys the metaphor of voice in a way that reconceptualizes it while still tying it to writing. Voice is an important element of writing, but voice is not understood as origin, as singular, as Authorial. Rather, voice in writing is the *loss* of origin, the death of a singular self. This loss and death happens so that writing as a powerful action that celebrates multiplicity can begin. Writing, and voice's place in a discussion of writing, is valued. Barthes, here, works to disassociate the concept of voice in writing from the concept of singularity in order to instead value multiplicity.

Finally, multiplicity displaces singularity through a celebration of disruption and

change; not only are specific disruptions and specific change proposed, but the very concepts of disruption and change are themselves presented as necessary for writing and for power. Power is attached to the idea of change, and change happens through continuous disruption, of one's context, of one's identity, of the currently in place structures of power, of anything that is at risk of becoming accepted as a universal or eternal truth. I understand change as celebrating the value of multiplicity through a displacement of the value of preservation, which is celebrated in traditionalist notions of masculine power. Cixous (1976) claims that "writing is precisely *the very possibility of change*, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures" (p. 883). The desire for change and the goal of subverting dominant social and political structures is shared by critical theory. However, for poststructuralist authors, these goals are less overtly political. Critical theory, for example, celebrates and values subversion and disruption with specific political ends, such as overturning specific capitalist or patriarchal or racist structures. Poststructuralist theory discussed here, values continuous rupture and subversion, not only rupture and subversion in order to give rise to a new structure. In this sense, multiplicity is a more fundamental celebrated value in these texts than in any examined in Chapters 2 and 3.

**Conclusions: Overturning Myths and Inscribing New Values**

The texts discussed in this chapter work to overturn longstanding myths of the writer: as logocentric, as Author, as sole meaning-maker in a text. Poststructuralist philosophy, of which Cixous (1976), Derrida (1988), and Barthes (1967) are foundational

and representational examples, works to challenge Truths and to dissemble long-standing universal values. However, Derrida, Barthes, and Cixous, while not authors often invoked as champions of the individual self, celebrate in their texts the values associated with the metaphor of voice. Further, because these authors wrestle with what it means to write and what it means to enact power as a writer and reader, these texts are important in a discussion of how the metaphor of voice shapes writing teachers' concepts of power and identity. The new myths and new values celebrated by Barthes, Derrida, and Cixous, among other critical theorists and poststructuralist philosophers, have influenced composition theorists such as Elbow (1973) and Bowden (1999), who represent champions and critics of voice alike, as they deal with the same myths of writer and meaning-making through writing.

In order to overturn common "myths," Cixous (1976), Derrida (1988), and Barthes (1967) deploy epideictic strategies. For example, each author invokes iconic authors as cultural touchstones in order to make their arguments about how writing works. Even as Derrida critiques these cultural touchstones such as Condillac, his audience would have been very familiar with this example, and so its use can be understood as epideictic. These authors also celebrate epideictic values, specifically those attached to the metaphor of voice. Even as they challenge and reconstruct the values attached to the metaphor of voice, those values are present in the text, and the shared values of power and identity in writing are held up while myths related to power and identity are challenged and overturned.

Because poststructuralist theory challenges important myths regarding how power

and identity function in writing, these texts impact how writing teachers understand power and identity in relation to teaching goals; as myths are overturned, writing instructors and theorists too must rethink what writing instruction *should do* and what it *can do* regarding student agency and student "voice." Farrin's (2005) essay "When Their Voice is the Problem" directly cites Barthes's "Death of the Author" in order to make his argument regarding the use of imitation in teaching writing. He sees Barthes's text as reason to rethink the notion of a unified, authentic writer behind a text, and reason for his pedagogy that emphasizes teaching students to adopt and integrate different "voices." Barthes, like Derrida and Cixous, does downplay the values of singularity (unity) and authenticity in favor of the value of multiplicity. Howard (1995), in her article "Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty" asks instructors and administrators to rethink the way that plagiarism is conceptualized, taught, and punished at the university, saying that "in the tradition of Roland Barthes [...] the author [is described as] a cultural arbiter" (p. 792) and positing that "If there is no originality and no literary property, there is no basis for the notion of plagiarism" (p. 791). Rollins (2006), in "Inheriting Deconstruction: Rhetoric and Composition's Missed Encounter with Jacques Derrida," argues that the most valuable lesson writing teachers can pass on to their students from Derrida's work is to be better, kinder readers, as they reconceptualize meaning-making as shared and multiple. Each of these authors presents distinct uptakes of what I argue are fundamental shifts in values attached to writing. While the value of power/empowerment is stable, learning to value multiplicity and difference means shifting a writing pedagogy that is rooted in valuing stability and

control in meaning-making.

While the poststructuralist texts discussed here are invested in overturning many myths and in challenging, on principle, all "universal truths," the myth that seems most relevant to a discussion of writerly voice is the myth associated with power and identity conceptualized as singular, and the value of singularity or coherence. Associated with those values is the value of control, which is often understood as power. Power in writing, and power attached to voice in writing, is understood by all the authors discussed so far through an ability to enter into a conversation or the ability to make a connection with a reader. Power is enacted when a writer makes meaning through a text, and when that meaning is read and understood by a reader. This conception of power seems universal, but it makes assumptions about the very nature of power and control. When Barthes (1967) and Derrida (1988) challenge the possibility and ethics of authorial control, then how can we understand writing as powerful? Similarly, when Cixous (1976) critiques authorial control as silencing, as *disempowering* for feminine subjects and feminine identity, then how can we conceptualize meaning-making as powerful? The introduction of multiplicity as a value in and of itself drastically repositions the concept of voice in writing and power as writing's key aim.

As they do for the authors discussed in previous chapters, the epideictic tactics that allow authors to present and celebrate radical values, such as multiplicity, also tend to conceptualize these values as mutually exclusive; in other words, the celebration of one value *must always* come at the displacement of a competing value. Epideictic rhetoric presents values as universal, eternal truths. Universal truths, by definition, are singular.

Even as these texts celebrate the value of multiplicity, which I discuss towards the end of this chapter, and work to overturn origin stories, the very function of epideictic language makes it difficult to hold more than one possible truth simultaneously. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) claim, the epideictic functions by strengthening adherence to one value at the displacement of a competing value. The baggage of epideictic metaphor lies in 1) all the values previously or simultaneously attached to a metaphor like voice, many of which appear contradictory and so mutually exclusive, and 2) the assumption that strengthening adherence to one value must always displace a competing value. So, the reader is left with the possible options of either 1) rejecting previously held values and concepts in favor of new, contradictory ones, or 2) rejecting these new values and concepts in favor of the previously held values and understandings associated with "voice," or, finally, 3) rejecting the metaphor altogether (as in the case of Bowden) precisely because it cannot serve a useful epideictic function if it is deployed in service of conflicting values and concepts.

While epideictic tactics work to reconceptualize identity and power, these same epideictic tactics tend to present these concepts as mutually exclusive; it is not only important that identity and power are conceptualized differently, but it is important that these concepts are understood as epideictic values, as universal truths. As such, although multiplicity is highlighted as a value in these texts, because of the nature of epideictic language and because of the epideictic metaphor of voice, it still functions as any other value. In other words, multiplicity is not valued alongside singularity in these texts. The celebration of one value must come at the displacement of competing values; even when

the value is itself multiplicity, the uptake of these texts often leads to pedagogies that treat multiplicity as an epideictic truth in a way that does not really value multiplicity in practice. In the next chapter I discuss how I see these conflicting values that are celebrated through the metaphor of voice played out in the documents that first year writing instructors designed for their students.

# Chapter 5
# Multiplicity in Action: Implications of Voice in Teaching and Writing Practice

*"Reading the study about teens and writing was somehow not all that surprising. Perhaps because I myself would agree with the assertions made. I write emails every day, I blog almost every day, and I text a lot every day. At the same time, I never have considered those to be true 'writing.' I will admit a lot of it contains slang and abbreviations. Maybe that is why it is not considered writing. I think that we all grow up with this idea of what writing really is pounded into us. Proper capitalization, proper nouns, proper this, proper that. Then when we step outside those bounds, we are incorrect. I also think that some even view it as wrong, with the whole idea that writing poorly outside of the realm of school will reflect badly on your performance in the classroom. Perhaps this could be true for some situations, but at the same time I think that writing outside the academic sphere creates our identities."*

--First Year Writing student final reflection

## Voice as Epideictic

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that voice functions as an epideictic metaphor in the field of composition and writing studies. As an epideictic metaphor, voice works to achieve communion with readers through a celebration of shared disciplinary values; this communion allows theorists to posit radical shifts regarding how these values are conceptualized or how writing instruction itself might be actualized. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 I illustrated the various ways in which voice celebrates the shared value of power achieved through writing across distinct, radical theoretical strands, each of which present different conceptualizations regarding *how* that power is best achieved and what power actually *looks like*. I have built on Lakoff and Johnson's argument that metaphor shapes conceptual framework and values, demonstrating voice's role in shaping such a framework in composition theory. I have also heavily drawn on Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) understanding of the significant role that shared values play in language usage, in establishing communion with an audience, and in moving an audience towards some action.

Understanding the values both celebrated and conceptualized through the metaphor

of voice is important for composition theorists and instructors as they work to create student-centered pedagogy that centers around a goal of understanding writing as power. As voice works to both celebrate and define *power* across divergent conversations, compositionists must explicitly investigate what power means, how it can be operationalized, and how the metaphor deployed to celebrate and conceptualize it at once celebrates and hides it. Because values such as power are constructed through the voice metaphor as unquestionable, eternal (in short, epideictic) ideas, a systematic investigation into the reciprocal relationship between the language compositionists use and the values upon which they design their theory, curriculum, and interactions with students is both difficult and necessary. In this Chapter I summarize my treatment of voice throughout this project and my major findings in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. I suggest that voice can, because of its epideictic function, serves as a useful example of multiplicity, a value that the poststructuralist texts I analyzed in Chapter 4 introduced and attached to voice. Finally, I suggest ways that this theoretical framework that I developed in Chapter 1 and implemented in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 can be applied to empirical data from research that investigates shared values and assumptions impacting the relationship between writing instructors and their students.

Understanding shared, celebrated disciplinary values, how they shape interactions with students, course and assignment design, and university writing goals, is important, particularly as common metaphors such as voice both add to the invisibility of and strengthen such shared values. Viewing the metaphor of voice as epideictic allows for another "way in" to a discussion regarding the impacts of such a prevalent, "invisible"

(Lanham) metaphor on day to day interactions with students and writing. These values, such as power, nature, and authenticity, which are not only expressed through but actually *strengthened* by voice, impact not only one-on-one student or classroom interactions, but also university-wide policy and curriculum for composition and writing instruction. The values established through the metaphor of voice impact how compositionists are able to move through material spaces and navigate their own experiences of power and identity. For example, I posit that these invisible values of nature and authenticity allowed Royster's (1996) colleague to make a judgment about her "authentic" self and, in turn, impacted how Royster could negotiate her identity with herself and with her shifting contexts as she navigated that difficult conversation. Because these values are always present and often unconscious, it is important to explicitly identify, discuss, and challenge them.

Finally, the work of identifying, analyzing, and critiquing these shared values is essential because the relationship between the values themselves and the language used to express them, such as the voice metaphor, is reciprocal. The framework of epideictic rhetoric allows an investigation into voice's role in celebrating and strengthening adherence to the value of power. Each time voice is deployed, the shared value of power is strengthened. As power becomes a more seemingly universal, shared value across even dissenting views in writing studies, the voice metaphor is more frequently utilized in composition theory. Voice (the language used to express and celebrate the value) and power (the celebrated value) strengthen each other in a reciprocal loop, making the term and celebrated value at once more invisible and more seemingly unquestionable. Again,

the type of investigation that this dissertation undertakes works to untangle and analyze that reciprocal relationship not necessarily to undo power as a key value or voice as a key term, but to make this epideictic work visible. In the following section, I summarize the key values I identified in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, each of which are celebrated and strengthened through the epideictic metaphor of voice.

**Key values across conversations.** In this section I summarize the core values that I identified within each of the three major conversations, expressivism, critical pedagogies, and poststructuralism, and summarize each body chapter of the dissertation. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 investigated how each distinct conversation deploys *voice* as an epideictic metaphor and identifies the core, shared values celebrated by this metaphor. Expressivism, critical pedagogies, and poststructuralism are each representative of a conversation which breaks from 'traditional' or contemporary, dominant ways of understanding writing. Moreover, each conversation posits radical breaks from standard, accepted conceptualizations regarding how to teach writing, how to view the relationship between composition and material empowerment, and how writing functions as meaning making. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 I examined how, as they propose these radical breaks from their theoretical contemporaries and recast perceived truths as problematic myths, these texts use epideictic means to create a foundation of shared values with their audience. In each chapter, I focused on the role of the epideictic metaphor of voice in at once strengthening adherence to and reconceptualizing these values.

Chapter Two examined the metaphor of voice deployed as an epideictic metaphor in expressivist texts. I identified three core values, power, nature, and authenticity, as

central values celebrated through the metaphor of voice in Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*. I argued that power served as a sort of epideictic cornerstone; Elbow establishes power as a universal value and goal of writing, and early in his text establishes voice as the key means for achieving power through writing. He then works to attach the values of nature and authenticity to the value of power by conceptualizing a powerful voice as natural and as authentic. Voice does the epideictic work, throughout his text, of strengthening adherence to the already accepted and celebrated value of power while also stitching the values of nature and authenticity to power. In this way, Elbow develops his pedagogy as the best way of achieving power through a focus on developing natural, authentic voice. In addition to identifying these core values and articulating their relationship to each other and to voice, I examine voice's metonymic role in Elbow's text, arguing that just as voice works to value a text that is natural and authentic, expressivist voice also works to value an individual writer who is perceived as natural and authentic.

Chapter Three identified voice's epideictic function across critical and feminist theoretical texts, and identified the same core value of power. However, I argued in this chapter that these critical and feminist texts work to disassociate power from nature and authenticity. I demonstrated the ways in which the epideictic metaphor of voice functions, across these texts, to signal and celebrate power, even though power is dramatically reconceptualized as compared to the way that power is imagined in the expressivist texts I analyzed in Chapter 2. By severing the ties between voice and the values of nature and authenticity, these critical and feminist conversations conceptualize

power as structural and shared, rather than as rooted in "individual" or "authentic" voice. In some ways, the conceptualization of power and agency are directly at odds with a power attached to the metaphor of voice in Elbow's text, which relies on understanding power as coming from within an individual and as enacted through a sort of self-actualization and cultivation of natural, authentic "voice." The texts explored in Chapter Three conceptualized power as coming from political and material realities, outside the individual, and as often imposed upon one group of individuals by other groups. For these theorists, voice does not signal an authentic identity but rather a group identification, which is both fluid and constructed rather than fixed and natural. As such, I argued that voice's metonymic function was likewise distinct from the metonymic function voice plays in expressivist texts. Namely, in these texts, voice conceptualizes identity as contextual and as shared, and so voice signaled group rather than individual identity.

In Chapter Three, I argued that detaching voice from the understanding of a fixed, natural individual identity avoids essentializing identity. I argued that detaching identity from the values of nature and authenticity gave rise to such overtly political pedagogies as Giroux's and Gore's, while, at the same time, created a foundation for Farrin's (2005) more conservative pedagogy based upon imitation and which erases any inherent relationship between an individual and his own voice. The understanding of voice in Chapter Two is useful for developing a pedagogy that focuses on individual realization and empowerment. However, this same understanding of voice tends to ignore material constraints that might get in the way of certain individuals' participation in this

pedagogy. Further, this expressivist understanding of voice, which focuses on valuing nature and authenticity, has the potential to essentialize writer identity. Pedagogies such as Gore's and Giroux's are overtly interested in grappling with the structural barriers to realizing individual power and view writing instruction as an opportunity to uncover and dismantle these barriers by focusing on collective, group, and political concepts of voice. At the same time, I argue that this move to displace the values of nature and authenticity leads to pedagogies such as Farrin's, which also recognizes structural barriers to individual empowerment but which also views voice as completely detached from the individual, ignoring important ways in which language does shape identity and culture. This pedagogy moves too far in the other direction from essentializing identity and ends up with the same effect: certain voices are inherently more valued than other voices, and material power structures that prevent certain individuals from participating in power and meaning-making are not critiqued or questioned. In short, I argue that this type of pedagogy results in only certain voices "being heard," since power is only achievable through being born into or learning to appropriate and embody the voice of the dominant culture.

In Chapter Four, I analyzed a poststructuralist understanding of voice, which uses the metaphor to signal a more complicated relationship among writer, reader, and text. In the texts I investigated, the value of power is still generally celebrated, although power is conceptualized as inherently limited. Further, in these poststructuralist texts, power is disassociated from authorial control and conversations regarding power and meaning making are often shifted from focusing on the writer to focus on the reader. Since

poststructuralist theories of power and of identity are often directly and indirectly cited in composition theory, the different uptake of the metaphor of voice in these texts is important for compositionists work with writing and with students. In addition to detaching the shared value of power from the concept of control, these texts use the epideictic metaphor of voice to focus on dismantling myths regarding writing, power, and subjectivity. Voice again plays a metonymic role across these poststructuralist texts, although Barthes, Derrida, and Cixous play with the notion of "mistaking" a text for its author and deconstruct the very concept of authorial voice. Barthes, Derrida, and Cixous recognize voice as celebrating the value of power and as metonymy for a writing subject, but each theorist works to play with and redefine the notions of power and of subjectivity, in turn dramatically reconceptualizing voice and the values it celebrates.

**Power of the epideictic.** In this section, I argue again that understanding voice as specifically epideictic allows for a new way to understand the significance of this metaphor for conversations in the field of composition. I posit that the metaphor's controversial nature and its difficulty to "pin down" or lack of a clear referent is actually a benefit of, rather than a deterrent to, its epideictic function.

Understanding voice as an epideictic metaphor gives compositionists another way to talk about the controversy and the usefulness of this metaphor. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, epideictic rhetoric, by focusing on shared values, offers a new lens through which to view the metaphor of voice. Recognizing the values attached to and celebrated by this metaphor, across different conversations and different metaphorical referents, also provides a new way to view the work university writing

instructors do with students and the barriers and perceived barriers to that work. Finally, I argue that viewing the voice metaphor as epideictic can reframe the voice metaphor as not only prevalent, useful, and controversial, but as a material, linguistic example of how multiplicity and dissonance can be valued across composition theory and practice.

Focusing on the voice metaphor's epideictic qualities and having a transparent, open conversation about the ways in which this metaphor is deployed in dissonant ways can be another opportunity to more fully practice student-centered writing instruction by explicitly engaging the values informing such instruction. Bowden (1999) critiques voice for its epideictic baggage; I argue that voice's potential problems lie not in its dissonant referents but in presenting these values *as mutually exclusive*. Viewing voice through the lens of epideictic rhetoric provides insight into why the values and concepts celebrated by the metaphor so often appear inherently incompatible with competing values and concepts. Teaching that overtly examines this metaphor and the workings of its own rhetoric (as Gore argues feminist pedagogy ought always to do) can be a way to move past dissonance conceptualized as merely a starting point for argumentation. Explicitly discussing voice's epideictic function can, instead, enable an understanding of unresolved dissonance, or multiplicity, as not only an *inevitability* but as something to be *valued*.

The poststructuralist texts I analyzed in Chapter 4 celebrate multiplicity as a novel, unfamiliar value and attach this value to voice and to the accepted, familiar value of power. Many compositionists (e.g., Lu & Horner, 2013; Howard, 1995) likewise work towards celebrating multiplicity (of voice, of ideas, of writing practices) as a shared value across writing instruction. As Derrida (1988) argues, one can never claim that any word

is "unique, univocal, rigorously controllable." At the same time, Derrida illustrates ample evidence of the ability to make meaning with and through texts. In this way, Derrida works to unravel the value of control, and the conceptualization of control as an essential element in communication. Building off what Derrida, Cixous (1976), and Barthes (1967) explicitly argue and what the authors discussed throughout this dissertation implicitly demonstrate, I argue that this transparent lack of control makes voice a valuable metaphor in the theoretical and practical work of writing studies. I advocate for accepting the metaphor of voice not *in spite of* but *because of* its uncontrolableness, its many referents, and the diverse (and even dissonant) concepts and values to which voice attaches itself.

Understanding the metaphor of voice as primarily epideictic also helps to do the work of detaching the metaphor from the value of control; because the metaphor is not understood in terms of a precise referent but rather in terms of a multiplicity of values, it can be easier to see this multiplicity as a positive rather than negative attribute. While voice's referents are often unclear, voice does consistently celebrate power across dissonant strands. Even though power is differently conceptualized across conversations, it is a present and central concern in each conversation I analyzed in this dissertation. The epideictic lens provides a way to frame metaphorical language in terms of values, and making those values present and explicit allows for critical engagement with them. To teach in a way that actively embraces multiplicity, composition scholars must first recognize what values their discipline collectively celebrates and how these values shape their material realities and interactions with others, and then work to either intentionally

live or challenge these values. In the following section, I discuss the potential for voice to serve as a material, linguistic celebration of multiplicity and examine both benefits and difficulties of celebrating multiplicity in composition theory and practice.

**Valuing Multiplicity through Embracing Dissonance**

In this section, I argue that the metaphor of voice, because of its prevalence and its embedded dissonances in the field of composition, presents compositionists with an opportunity to actively value multiplicity in their theory and practice. Further, I argue that understanding voice as epideictic allows writing scholars to open up a discussion about dissonance and multiplicity as useful rather than as inherently harmful or negative. As my review of the literature demonstrated in Chapter 1, the metaphor of voice is often accused, by critics such as Bowden, of possessing too many conflicting referents and too much historical baggage to be considered useful to composition's attempts at conceptualizing power and identity in texts. Worse still, the metaphor is accused of celebrating old, no longer compatible values (like valuing speech over text) that are antithetical to composition's current stance on writing and to the values that writing teachers wish to pass on to their students. I argue that one of the most valuable functions of the metaphor of voice is its transparent dissonances, its resistance towards rigid communicative control. Rather than understanding voice's fractured identity as a failure, voice serves as a familiar, tangible, material example of something that is both valuable and problematic: it is a metaphor that in each of its usages celebrates the value of multiplicity.

For the metaphor of voice to function as a material means to actively value

multiplicity, compositionists must first appreciate it as an epideictic metaphor while actively working against the epideictic "baggage" it presents of making values and concepts appear as mutually exclusive. Understanding voice as an epideictic metaphor--as a term whose use is primarily epideictic rather than referential--allows compositionists to open up a discussion about the discipline's shared values as well as how those values impact theory and, importantly, interactions with and expectations for students enrolled in a composition course.

**Overturning the dissonance "myth."** In this section I present a brief history of dissonance as a negative concept in composition. I argue that despite dissonance presented or theorized as an uncomfortable, negative thing that always requires resolution, students and writers often function and even thrive within a state of dissonance. For example, students are often asked to inhabit multiple, dissonance voices, and writers work to create a voice that is both authentic and contextually or situationally appropriate. At the theoretical level dissonances are troubling, but at the level of day-to-day classroom interactions, dissonance is quite natural.

Academia often relies on the belief in the necessity for order; as I discuss below, dissonance presents a troubling challenge to that sense of order (even composition's founding principle of gatekeeping works towards maintaining order at the threat of chaos). According to Young, Becker, and Pike (1970), in their foundational text *Rhetoric, Discovery, and Change*, research in the social sciences begins with a felt dissonance and the innate, human need to resolve dissonance through discovery. Young et al. insist that dissonance is an embodied discomfort, and that this discomfort must be

settled either through ignoring the cause of the dissonance or inquiring into the conflicting world views or beliefs through the process of developing a research question and subsequent investigation. While this text is useful and it often is the case that dissonance leads to systematic investigation aimed at resolution, Young et al. also rely on the implicit value of singularity by insisting that dissonance *must* be resolved. The epideictic baggage carried by the metaphor of voice that I examined in this dissertation similarly functions under the belief that some things are mutually exclusive, and that dissonance always presents itself as a challenge or as negative. As such, actively valuing multiplicity, or viewing dissonance as a positive or neutral state, is challenging. Even in the poststructuralist texts that I examined in Chapter 4 that use voice to celebrate the value of multiplicity, there is still a perceived discomfort with dissonance.

Understanding dissonance as negative or problematic, in academia generally and in the field of rhetoric and writing studies more specifically, is in some ways as "natural" or "eternal" as using voice in student-centered composition theory to celebrate the shared value of power. Further, understanding dissonance as problematic is rooted in the deeply entrenched conceptualization of power as control, which I discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. For example, Young et al. (1970) begin chapter 5 of their book *Rhetoric, Discovery and Change* asking the reader "When you sense a difficulty, how can you get enough control over it to begin systematic investigation?" (p. 89). This "voiced" text, which immediately establishes a connection to the reader by using the second person "you" and by posing a direct question, as if to engage the reader in a dialogue, also immediately celebrates the assumed value of control. The social sciences, and academia and teaching

more generally, often celebrate this value of control as a means to achieving power, which poststructuralist texts work to unhinge and displace. Research, according to Young et al., requires two things: a "difficulty," and "control" over that difficulty. They argue that this felt difficulty, or dissonance, is useful to the research process in that it sparks a research question and it pushes someone toward learning and growth. However, per Young et al., for a dissonance to accomplish these things it must be resolved. In fact, they position an unresolved dissonance as an ignored dissonance. I posit that so long as power is imagined as control, dissonance must be understood as inherently antithetical to power and, so, must be either resolved or ignored, just as Young et al. claim.

The poststructuralist texts I discussed in Chapter 4 work to displace control, and to disassociate control from the value of power. Still, despite widespread adoption of poststructuralist ideology, control is a deeply embedded, epideictic value across education, and to displace this value is itself uncomfortable, difficult work. I argue that the discomfort with dissonance is so strongly tied to the implicit, shared value of control that the discomfort is, as Young et al. describe it, an embodied, felt, emotional experience. As is the case for epideictic rhetoric and for the epideictic metaphor of voice specifically, the embodied aspect of celebrated values is precisely what makes them so difficult to change and deconstruct and, at the same time, what makes their direct and open critique so crucial.

Despite this discomfort with dissonance felt not only in composition and writing studies but in the social sciences and even more universally in research and academia, writing students frequently occupy dissonance in writing classrooms. Differently put,

writing classrooms are inherent, active celebrations of multiplicity. As Farrin (2005) observes, students are already often adept at switching between the voice of the playground and the voice of the classroom. Writing teachers ask students to occupy and to embody multiple voices in the span of one writing class. They must take on a certain voice during group discussions, during a presentation, and during peer review sessions, then sit down to their writing and occupy yet another voice, the voice of a novice research writer using authorial voices to both enter an ongoing conversation and construct her own argument. As instruction moves online, multiplicity of identity has become even more readily apparent (Turkle, 1997).

Although writing courses typically ask students (and teachers) to act in a way that values specific instances of multiplicity, particularly multiplicity of voice and identity, the concept of multiplicity itself is not always explicitly valued. Further, as long as values are understood as mutually exclusive, the desire to resolve dissonance can displace the ability to value multiplicity as a concept. In fact, the adherence to the value of singularity, wrapped up and expressed in other values like logic, organization, reason, even citational practices, can seem counter to valuing multiplicity. I argue that explicitly valuing multiplicity, and recognizing the ways in which multiplicity and dissonance are already actively valued in writing classrooms, allows compositionists to confront the troubling paradox in writing instruction: even when the idea of multiplicity is valued, singularity is often sought as an end (the evolution of process theory in composition

studies is a good example of this frequent paradox)[2]. The desire for control, and the valuing of singularity as an end goal, makes it difficult to approach writing from a standpoint of inherent multiplicity.

Another example of this paradox can be seen in Farrin's (2005) pedagogy of imitation, which I discussed in Chapter 3. Farrin recognizes that multiplicity is an inescapable, lived reality for his students. He sees that they are able (and often willing) to occupy multiple voices and to code-switch according to context. His pedagogy based on imitation stems from this recognition that multiplicity of voice can be beneficial to empower his students. However, his pedagogy is still anchored in resolving dissonance and valuing singularity, which shows through in his inability to recognize both that identity is fluid and that, *at the same time, there is some stability or core to identity that is important for students to celebrate and retain*. Identity, and voice, is not essential or inherent; however, voice is tied to identity, and learning to change one's voice also impacts one's relationship with that identity. I view Farrin's pedagogy as problematic not because it understands voice and identity as multiple, but because it fails to really engage multiplicity in its understanding of that relationship between identity and voice.

Similarly, I see an inability to really celebrate multiplicity as a core value embedded in Royster's (1996) uncomfortable encounter with a colleague who praised her for using her "authentic voice" despite Royster's own insistence that she has many

[2] Critics of process theory in composition studies (such as Thomas Kent) are quick to point out that, while the theory developed to view writing as a recursive, messy, multiple-step process, many textbooks based on process theory have turned each step in this process into an end product; as such, process theory pedagogies tend to still value singularity and finished products, even when these products represent various stages in a process.

"authentic voices." This colleague likely sensed that Royster (as she describes herself) was comfortable with many voices, but rather than recognizing that each of Royster's "voices" was an equally authentic expression of herself, the implicit value of singularity over multiplicity led this person to seek out and value the *one most authentic voice* that she could identify. There are other problematic assumptions at work here, as there are in Farrin's (2005) text, that authors I examined in Chapter 3 emphasize. When voice is understood as both belonging to an authentic, coherent individual--as an innate quality--and also as marking belonging to a group, then one cannot separate political and social contexts from a discussion of voice. Racism, sexism, and capitalism lead to valuing some voices over others, and also lead to situations in which certain individuals are assumed to have certain voices: how could this colleague of Royster's possibly judge which voice is most "authentic"? I suggest that valuing multiplicity could push against valuing singularity and subsequent linguistic hierarchies that capitalism, racism, sexism, etc. push. In these systems, there can only ever be one correct voice; even if there is a recognition that different voices are valued in different contexts, there is still an inability to value multiple voices in the same context, or to understand context as significantly multiple. Working to value multiplicity certainly will not resolve any large systemic problems, but can help to identify dissonance and to work towards shifting how compositionists interact with students and with other writers and humans. As Rollins (2006) claims, writing instructors and students can learn to be better, kinder readers.

**Difficulty with multiplicity in practice.** In this section, I argue that although dissonance is an often "natural" and workable state for writers to inhabit, valuing

multiplicity in current educational and cultural structures can be difficult. I argue that because of the epideictic baggage of voice, certain values appear to be mutually exclusive, and so valuing two dissonant things at once can be difficult. In addition to the examples I gave in the previous section of Farrin's (2005) pedagogy and Royester's (1996) problematic encounter, below I examine several examples of composition's difficulty in embracing and valuing multiplicity when actively valuing multiplicity seems directly counter to other disciplinary priorities, such as maintaining standards and practicing control.

In *Defending Access*, Fox (1999) describes a dissonance, experienced in the wake of open enrollment at City University of New York, between wanting to increase access to higher education for underrepresented groups of students while, at the same time, wanting to preserve university standards. Fox describes this devotion to standards by, I argue, demonstrating the discomfort with perceived dissonance and the celebration of singularity. Because university writing (and language) standards are understood in terms of valuing singularity instead of multiplicity, rather than understanding students as writing differently, students who write differently are conceptualized as writing *wrong*. Fox identifies the problem that many universities encounter, saying that they want to increase access but fear that really embracing diversity (or multiplicity) would come at the cost of lowering university standards in order to accommodate multiplicity. I argue that the problem Fox identifies can be understood through the lens of the epideictic, of shared values, and more specifically the troublesome value of multiplicity. While multiplicity (often conceptualized as diversity) is a professed value of Fox's university

system, it is not really a practiced or enacted value. Valuing multiplicity aided in open enrollment, which is one way to increase access. However, valuing singularity ties administrators and teachers to a concept of standards that is in direct conflict with the concept of access, and as such writing teachers like Fox were asked by university administrators to serve a gate-keeping function within university basic writing courses.

Fox (1999) identifies the dissonance of on the one hand wanting to increase access and on the other hand not wanting to lower standards. However, as Fox points out (in different language) that this dissonance is conceptualized as a *problem to be solved* only because standards are understood in terms of singularity, rather than multiplicity. In other words, Fox chronicles the university's desire to "fix" these students because standards and singularity appear to be mutually exclusive: rather than viewing the students as actively diversifying the university's writing culture, the student's diverse literacies are presented by the university as threatening to the singular, hierarchical notion of standards. Howard (1995), too, identifies a dissonance that writing instructors and students commonly face that, I argue, is again rooted in a failure to actively value multiplicity. Howard, in "Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty," identifies and grapples with the dissonance of wanting to teach students to engage with multiple voices in a text while framing plagiarism in punitive terms. Citational practices and related plagiarism standards are closely linked with how we understand the value of multiplicity. Barthes (1967) and Derrida (1988) both discuss the ways in which writing is always a practice of citationality, of multiple voices speaking through a text. Student writers are asked to both develop their "own voices" in an unfamiliar, academic setting

while learning to juggle the "voices" of their citations. This task might be made less daunting with explicit attention to and valuing of multiplicity in writing. Howard discusses the problematic way in which plagiarism is often linked to either lack of knowledge regarding policy or explicit malice or dishonesty. She suggests that administrators and instructors rethink plagiarism policies as primarily punitive, arguing that patchwriting is an appropriate, even necessary step in learning to incorporate these multiple voices.

Distinguishing among voices rather than understanding how these voices work together is the dominant way of conceptualizing voice as singular. Royster's (1996) colleague and Fox's institution both distinguish among and hierarchize distinct voices. Valuing citational practices that explicitly distinguish between the writer's voice and the other voices of authority suggests yet another example of valuing singularity over multiplicity. Despite citational guidelines, it is often difficult to distinguish among the various voices in a text. Like Howard, I do not argue for the abandonment of citations, but rather advocate research into how these practices belie values and concepts of identity, singularity, and voice. The framework I provide in this dissertation allows for direct engagement with often hidden values and their reciprocal relationship with prevalent epideictic language.

**Dissonance and student writerly identities.** In this section, I discuss the possibility that valuing multiplicity of voices and of identity can allow students and teachers to dismantle or at least critically engage hierarchies that make certain "voices" or certain kinds of writing "better" or more desirable. I mention the PEW study that

suggested teens don't view non-academic textual communication that they engage in as writing, and I mention Farrin's (2005) pedagogy of imitation. I question whether a lack of valuing multiplicity is a factor both in not categorizing certain kinds of communication as writing and in dismissing certain voices as inappropriate in a classroom (or in a research paper). I suggest that understanding voice as a way to celebrate multiplicity might be a way into conversations about how or why certain writerly identities are privileged.

The PEW article entitled "Writing, Technology, and Teens," which I discussed briefly in Chapter 1, suggested that the teenagers polled in this study tended to make sharp distinctions between the writing they did in school and the writing they did among their friends. One of the biggest conclusions of this survey was that "Even though teens are heavily embedded in a tech-rich world, they do not believe that communication over the Internet or text messaging is writing." Not only did teens, in other words, consider these types of writing to be different, but they did not even consider the type they did in their everyday lives to be writing at all. Like Farrin's (2005) students, the teens surveyed were adeptly able to code-switch for different, appropriate communication context. However, one context is obviously valued differently than the other context, to the extent that only one is considered to be writing.

I suggest that understanding the values that inform compositionists conceptualization of voice, writing, power, and identity can be another lens through which to interpret this survey's finding. Are the students surveyed valuing multiplicity as they conceptualize what "counts" and "does not count" as writing? Does Farrin (2005) value multiplicity when he notes which voices are "the problem" and which voices are

"appropriate"? Both of these questions could be answered by a discussion of context. Farrin might argue that yes, he values multiplicity precisely through his pedagogy of imitation, which accounts for different contexts and teaches students to be appropriate for that context. Students surveyed, too, might be understood as responding to context, as appropriately differentiating between the writing they do in and outside of school. However, I would argue that the various contexts are not equally valued, and so the voices, while appropriate for different contexts, are also not equally valued. As such, I do not see these examples as really valuing multiplicity. Rather, I see them as a further demonstration of a need to resolve dissonance, to bracket things and to separate and, implicitly or explicitly, to value one at the displacement of the other. Can one claim to celebrate a multiplicity of voices while at the same time argue that some are not appropriate voices for writing? If teens valued multiplicity, could they more readily see the writing that they do as writing, different from but just as much *writing* as the writing they do in school?

Reflection papers written by my own students tended to suggest the same "bracketing off" of communication they did in their everyday, nonacademic lives and what they considered "real writing." Several students even reflected that they did not think of the writing they did in school, primarily research writing, as communication. Understanding how students categorize and define writing and communication in terms of values might be a way to examine and deconstruct these categories along with students. The metaphor of voice, in its inherent celebration of multiplicity, might provide a way into these conversations with writing students. By focusing readings and

conversations on various, seemingly dissonant understandings of *voice*, writing instructors can examine with their students the ways in which this metaphor celebrates multiplicity in its various, often imprecise, deployment. Focusing writing courses on an investigation of such common language and the connection between metaphors and values, teachers and students can likewise examine their own values and conceptions of voice, communication, and identity. Discussing the metaphor can also lead to discussions of compartmentalization and explorations of ways to really celebrate multiplicity in writing.

**Conclusions and Considerations for Future Research**

As I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, while compositionists disagree regarding specific disciplinary concepts and goals, the common metaphor of voice consistently celebrates power across the divergent strands of expressivism, critical pedagogy, and poststructuralism. In addition to celebrating power as a consistent, shared disciplinary value, the metaphor of voice is uniquely positioned to challenge the values of singularity and control and to work towards actively valuing multiplicity and re-conceptualizing dissonance. Voice as an enduring, significant, controversial metaphor in the field of composition and writing studies, and understanding voice as epideictic, create the space to move beyond critiques of its instability and towards embracing both shared values and dissonant (but not mutually exclusive) approaches in celebrating and conceptualizing those values.

Along with the values of power and identity, which are celebrated through *voice* across distinct conversations in the field of composition, the epideictic metaphor of voice

provides a way into a celebration of the value of multiplicity. Multiplicity, expressed as dissonance, is a more complex or controversial value than power and identity. However, a meta-discussion of the metaphor of voice can open the possibility of explicitly and materially celebrating this value. Further, transparent discussion with students about the multiple ways that they must *be* in a writing classroom--and in their meaning making through text more generally--can help students to value these multiple selves, multiple voices, multiple ways of making meaning. Writing instructors value mulimodality, diversity, and a host of other concepts that might be placed under the umbrella of multiplicity. I offer the metaphor of voice as a chance to explore and engage this value with students and in our own work.

The metaphor of voice has been, and continues to be, an important metaphor in the field of writing studies and composition. It has helped to shape our discipline *as* a progressive one, serving as a way to explore and expand the emancipatory possibilities of writing and education. It has, moreover, helped to shape the discipline as student-centered and as other than skills acquisition in service of other fields. Even in its contentiousness, the metaphor of voice celebrates the shared values of power and identity and pushes practitioners and teachers to think about the human in a text. Understanding voice as serving a primarily epideictic function and being explicit in uncovering the values associated with this metaphor provide yet another useful "job" for voice in our field. As compositionists work to be student-centered and to celebrate multiplicity in all its forms, I argue that this metaphor will continue to serve them well, so long as it is not made invisible in its ubiquity. In the following section I describe an example of practical

research into writing instruction that focuses on shared values. Specifically, I describe my own focus group research that investigated the role of writing prompts in first year writing courses and suggest that this type of data can be usefully understood in terms of shared values. The theoretical framework I provide in this dissertation both opens a discussion of shared, embedded values and, more specifically, of multiplicity as an important value in composition practice.

**Multiplicity and assignment prompts.** In this section, I describe a collaborative investigation into student-centered research writing prompts and suggest that the way instructors talked about their prompts across two focus group sessions can be explained through the lens of voice as epideictic. I further posit that while analysis of the prompts themselves indicate an active celebration of multiplicity, the discussion of and shared dissatisfaction with their prompts implies the writing instructor participants' failure to recognize multiplicity as valuable. The dissatisfaction seemed to engage the epideictic baggage of voice that casts competing values and concepts as mutually exclusive.

In summer of 2012, I acted as lead investigator in a collaborative project that examined how first year writing instructors at a large, metropolitan, land grant university viewed the role of their research writing prompts in their student-centered writing courses. My co-researchers and I asked two groups of five instructors to discuss their research writing prompts and how these prompts feature in their teaching and their relationships with students. What began as an investigation into prompts as possible sites for student-teacher negotiation in a writing course evolved into an exploration of shared values expressed in both, separate focus groups. These values tended to align with many

of the values expressed through the metaphor of voice: identity, power, and, most significantly multiplicity and meaning-making. As I illustrated previously in this chapter, actively valuing multiplicity is a struggle, and I saw this struggle play out in instructors' inability to recognize the good work that they were already doing in their classrooms. Instructors' main complain about their assignment prompts was that these documents were "bureaucratic" and fixed; they were presented as "contracts," as something that they had to do, and could not embody their actual values regarding their work with students and writing. While these documents are largely bureaucratic and are certainly required, I argue that they serve multiple purposes. I describe, briefly, the findings from this research below, including a summary of participants' discussion and rhetorical analysis of the prompts' "voices," and I explain how the epideictic values of control and singularity possibly prevented the teachers from recognizing the multiplicity in their prompts, the ways in which they could be both contractual and sites for negotiation, both bureaucratic and voiced texts at the same time.

The participants in this focus group described their pedagogy as student-centered, and analysis of their prompts as well as the focus group conversations suggests that power was of central concern. On the one hand, participants lamented a felt lack of power when it came to the creation of their prompts, and on the other hand, participants wanted to give creative or meaning-making power to their students through their assignment design. Jennifer Gore urges composition theorists and instructors to stop thinking of power as a "zero sum game," in which a teacher must give up some of her power in order to give the students more agency and power in the classroom. I argue that

this warning can also be heeded when considering the uses of the voice metaphor in the field of composition and the various tensions this metaphor might, on the one hand, "mask" or "obscure," but on the other hand, might allow to coexist without the need to resolve them. I further argue that classroom teachers are often already aware of and able to live with various unresolved tensions in their writing classrooms. However, because dissonance is often understood as an obstacle it can be difficult for instructors to see the ways in which they are already embodying multiplicity in their curriculum and assignments.

***Focus group values.*** This project began as a collaborative exploration of research assignment prompts as potential sites for teacher-student negotiation in first year writing classrooms. Because the nature of focus groups is inherently epideictic and a good site for exploring how the epideictic functions in a collaborative setting, the epideictic focus grew organically out of a treatment of the data. As the instructors shared their experience and their views of teaching, shared values began to emerge in the conversation. By the end of the focus group, these values seemed more firmly in place. I read these focus group conversations through the lens of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) concept of epideictic rhetoric, since the conversations strengthened an adherence to shared values among the participants.

My co-researchers and I investigate elsewhere the role of the prompt as a negation of power. In this chapter, I analyze and posit the way in which shared values, and particularly those values I identify in this dissertation as attached to the metaphor of voice, function in these conversations among writing instructors. The value of power,

both teacher power and student power, were present throughout both focus group conversations as the key celebrated value. This value of power understood through the concept of control—teachers' control over their classrooms, students' control over their work, mutual control over their experience of the writing class—seemed to be the key reason for dissatisfaction with the prompt.

The prompt, according to these focus group conversations, felt undynamic, singular, closed-off, and bureaucratic; in short, the prompt represented a document handed down "from above," whose main purpose was limiting student and teacher control. The prompt itself became the representation of power, and the prompt also seemed to stand in for structural power, bureaucratic power, institutional power: all of which run directly contrary to the values celebrated by the metaphor of voice. The prompt, in short, seemed to limit rather than encourage shared meaning-making between teacher and student.

The value of power was expressed by the participants in several ways. For example, the teachers participating in both focus groups tended to value face-to-face, conversational interactions with their students. In these interactions, students were described as being more empowered to participate fully in their education, and teachers felt empowered to respond to individual student needs. This value was determined based on the teachers' time spent discussing the classroom and individual interactions with students versus time they spent discussing the prompt itself. Further, teachers seemed dissatisfied with their prompt's ability to fit into this valuing of face-to-face interaction into the design of their writing assignment prompts.

Despite the focus group participants' expressed dissatisfaction with the prompts, my examination found these texts to be dynamic sites of multiplicity and dissonance. Rather than falling short of the expressed values of context, process, and collaboration, these prompts made concrete choices that operationalized and celebrated these values. I posit that because dissonance, attached to the value of multiplicity (and understood as the negative or problematic element of multiplicity), is not celebrated the instructors had a difficult time understanding the prompts as *both* bureaucratic and authentically 'voiced' texts. Further, the celebration of voice, and voice's history as an epideictic metaphor, both seemed to guide the values present in these prompts and to prevent the participants from recognizing the prompts as capable of celebrating these shared values. In other words, the epideictic baggage of the metaphor of voice and the lack of valuing multiplicity in action prevented the instructors from seeing the prompts as dynamic, successful texts.

***The prompts as sites of operationalized dissonance.*** In this section, I argue that the prompts, like the voice metaphor itself, might be useful to think of as material examples of dissonance-in-action. In these prompts dissonance can be reframed as multiplicity and recast as a positive (or at least unresolvable) state. Despite the expressed dissatisfaction with the prompts and their ability to really *show* all the work and thinking that they were meant to capture, I found these prompts to be rich sites of operationalized multiplicity. Further, each prompt seemed to contain functional, useful dissonances, and as such were able to be many things at once (just as they asked students to be many things at once). These prompts might be understood not as failures but rather as excellent examples of

multiplicity in texts.

Participants complained that these texts were not able to capture the same interaction that they had with students in face-to-face situations. These complaints belie an adherence to the same values expressed in the texts I examine in the above chapters. Largely, these texts were seen as bureaucratic and "voiceless." Lanham identifies the "bureaucratic voice" as a style that is intentionally difficult to read. Although instructors described their prompts as bureaucratic, they are marked with language that is intentionally readable. For example, each prompt is written using the second person.

In addition to being what Lanham would consider "voiced" texts, these prompts can also be read and understood through the lens of the epideictic. As such, I argue that they celebrate the same values that instructors celebrate in their conversations. Further, I understand these values as consistent with those celebrated through the metaphor of voice as identified in this dissertation. Each prompt celebrated the values of power, of context, and of multiplicity. Power and multiplicity are named values celebrated in the texts discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Context, while not a named value, speaks to the value that is essential to the metaphor of voice: the value of establishing communion, or a connection between reader and writer. Context, further, is a concept connected with the conceptualization of meaning making as shared and as multiple. It might also, problematically, be understood as a celebration of spoken rather than written communication; critics such as Bowden warn of this celebrated value inherent in the metaphor of voice. However, as the prompts were able to celebrate context in a written text, I argue that this celebration does not necessarily prioritize speech over writing. The

fact that focus group participants did tend to prioritize face-to-face, spoken communication with their students demonstrates the degree to which certain values and concepts regarding the nature of writing and speech are so deeply embedded in the way that these writing instructors conceptualize written and spoken communication.

Research writing prompts provide rich sites for further research into how values are celebrated and operationalized in writing classrooms. Further study of these documents that focus not on prompts as means to an end but as dynamic, important texts in and of themselves is warranted. Understanding voice as an epideictic metaphor and explicitly looking at such "voiced" texts (texts that literally serve as points of conversation between reader and writer) allow for the important work of uncovering the values that frame our relationship with students and with our own writing. The theoretical framework that I developed and deployed in this dissertation would provide a useful way to both set up such practical investigations into student and teacher values and would provide a focusing lens for analyzing data.

**Future research.** Using the framework of epideictic rhetoric, a more specific investigation into research prompts as sites of operationalized, shared disciplinary values would be a useful way to better understand the values that conceptualize the foundation of composition studies in practice. Specifically, the method that I deploy in this dissertation to investigate voice's epideictic function in theoretical texts could provide a useful framework for understanding the values celebrated in practical texts such as assignment prompts and course syllabi. Further, I posit that research focused on assumed shared values among writing instructors and students would offer useful ways to

understand the ways in which students and teachers differently understand the goals of first year writing courses and ways in which students and teachers differently conceptualize "good" writing more generally.

The student quote at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates a phenomenon I introduce in Chapter 1, wherein student writers tend to bracket off the kind of writing they do in school from everyday writing. According to student feedback such as this student quote and survey research from Lenhart et al. (2008), students tend to view university writing as more distanced or separated from their own personal identities. At the same time, writing that *is* more closely associated with a writer's identity is often less valued in academic situations. As I have argued at various points in this dissertation, this phenomenon can be understood as related to voice's epideictic baggage and to the more general difficulty of valuing multiplicity. Explicit research into voice as an epideictic metaphor can work to undo the tendency to understand concepts and values as inherently mutually exclusive by focusing on the ways in which values are shared and celebrated.

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